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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1916.

THE TUTOR'S STORY.¹

BY THE LATE CHARLES KINGSLEY.

REVISED AND COMPLETED BY HIS DAUGHTER, LUCAS MALET.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ugly scene followed. Violent, even brutal, on the one part, abject yet tricky on the other, it reflected small enough credit on either. Had it not proved the pivot upon which subsequent events turned, I would willingly leave it unrecorded.

Fearing what might happen, I sprang to my feet, crippled though I was. But long before I could reach him, I saw Hartover strike the man in the face with a crack like a pistol shot, which, I own, made me shudder all over; seize him by the collar, and, dragging him forward, hurl him into the middle of the room, shutting and locking the door behind him.

In vain I implored the boy to restrain himself. Inflamed by—not wholly unrighteous—indignation, and by the desire of revenge, seeing too his romance profaned, made common and vulgar, the young barbarian, not to say young wild beast, broke loose in Hartover. He had a long score to settle with Halidane and proceeded to settle it in a primitive manner. Anger in his case was, unfortunately, not inarticulate. He let fly with tongue as well as with fists.

'Sneak, scoundrel,' he thundered—'you dirty hypocrite. Gad, I'll punish you—I'll punish you. Always making mischief between me and my father—setting him against me.—Take that—and that—and that, sir.—Always getting money out of him, too, and robbing me—yes, robbing me to feed a crew of slaving rascals like yourself, who are too lazy to do an honest day's work as long as they can live at free quarters, sing hymns out of tune and mial prayers they don't believe in. I'll answer your prayers, for once, as they deserve to be

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answered. Take that, I tell you. And now, what have you heard, you dirty spy—what have you heard, I say? If you don't want to be pounded any more, answer me.'

Mr. Halidane was considerably taller and heavier than the boy, and should have been more than his equal in fighting capacity. But soft living and neglect of exercise had made him squashy—'of the consistence of an underdone sausage' as the boy put it naughtily. He had been taken wholly by surprise, moreover, and appeared rather contemptibly helpless under the lad's furious onslaught. It was not until I managed to throw myself between him and his assailant, that he gathered voice or courage enough to reply.

'The saints do not strive or cry, my lord,' he panted, 'or return blow for blow! But I would have you remember they are bidden to be prudent and watchful, not slothful in business or in the reproof of sinners—knowing that vengeance is the divine prerogative, and that He will repay, my lord,' he added viciously. 'Oh dear, yes—for His saints who humbly trust in Him—not a doubt about it, He will repay.'

'Which means,' the boy cried scornfully, 'that not having the pluck to be a ruffian you're only a rogue. I congratulate you. It forwards the cause of religion, doesn't it? Makes religion so attractive. And now, once again, Mr. Rogue, what have you overheard, I say?'

'What I have had to endure is the first question, my lord. I came here, by her ladyship's commands, to commune with Mr. Brownlow as one Christian brother—if I can any longer apply that sweet term to him—with another, about matters relating to the family. In return, I am attacked, struck, grossly ill-used and insulted by the pupil whom he prides himself upon having instructed in the loftiest principles of heathen—and unregenerate—virtue. The result of such instructions are, I think, manifest. I behold their fallen fruits!'

I felt almost inclined to laugh, in spite of my very real alarm and dismay. For the fallen fruits, in as far as they were visible, consisted of a purple stream—juice not of the grape—descending over Mr. Halidane's white shirt front, which he essayed unsuccessfully to staunch with a scarlet and green silk pocket-handkerchief. Still I answered, courteously and ceremoniously, that I was extremely shocked and grieved by so unfortunate a mistake, so unseemly an occurrence—that it was immensely to be regretted Mr. Halidane's position should have appeared equivocal—and so forth, smoothing matters to the best of my ability.

But the boy burst in again.

'What have you heard? I've given you one licking and, as I live, I'll give you another, and another after that.'

In vain I entreated for peace. His attitude remained threatening, while Halidane seemed slowly making up his mind to give way and speak.

'Lord Hartover,' he said at length, with a singular mixture of truculence and cringing, 'I think, as a Christian, I should return good for evil, and tell you plainly what—oh! with such pain!—I most unwillingly listened to, so that you may see how cruelly unfounded are your charges against me. I heard you, my lord, confess to having indulged a guilty passion for your step-mother's maid. Of that, however, I was, I grieve to say, only too well aware already—as, I have reason to believe, was this gentleman also. I heard you then confess your intention of marrying a farmer's daughter, in spite of whatever opposition your poor sainted father might offer—a young woman, I may add, indoctrinated with revolutionary ideas, which must be abhorrent to every right-minded, God-fearing person. And lastly, to my astonishment and horror, I heard this gentleman promise you his full aid and assistance in the prosecution of that most undutiful and even wicked project.'

This last was a rank falsehood; but I would not say so before Hartover. No—I was embarked fairly with him now. If I let him believe that I was going to cast him off at such a crisis, what might not happen? I would take my venture with him, and try to save him if I could. As for the other two counts, they were near enough to the truth to be made to do truth's work. Well—was not that all the more reason for standing by the boy in his extremity? He remained silent, choking with rage, but aware of his danger.

'And now, my lord, having clearly put before you our relative positions'—saying this, in a smooth voice, there was an evil look in his eye—'I think I may be permitted to wish your lordship a good afternoon. Mr. Brownlow, you will be my witness that throughout this painful interview I have at no time been wanting in the respect due to Lord Hartover's superior station.'

For which speech I longed to kick him. That which I longed to do, my pupil seemed about to do.

'Yes, you may go; but not through the door,' he said. 'The window is at your service, sir. Oblige me by leaving that way. You won't? Very good, then I'll make you.'

And before I could intervene, he snatched a rapier down from the wall and began forcing his victim back with the point towards the window.

'Here goes—a serpent must do for a dragon for once. You're the serpent, and I stand for St. George.'

Halidane, with the cold steel playing about his ribs, utterly unmanned, howled aloud to me for protection. I threw my arms round the boy, and quieted him sufficiently to get the key from his pocket and thus enable the wretched man to escape. Then I threw myself back into a chair, exhausted.

I passed a very miserable half-hour after that, and a humiliating one. The good work of months seemed to be undone; the self-control, which I had spent so many anxious hours in instilling, to be swept away. For the time being the boy was, to all practical intents and purposes, mad. He raved, he swore, he made wild plans. The villain had gone to tell his father; but he would not see his father. He would leave the house that moment. He would go down to Mr. Braithwaite and have it out with him. He would take a farm. He would enlist as a private soldier. He would go as a huntsman to hounds. He would do anything, everything. At last he raved himself thirsty, and rang the bell. William, who had I found been waiting outside, in terror, entered instantly.

'Drink, he must have drink! Some brandy. No. Champagne—that would keep his spirits up. Go to Marsigli, and tell him to send it. Curse them! He was heir to Hover yet, he would make somebody at least obey him!'

I was in despair. If drinking began again, all was indeed lost; and, before I fully realised what I was doing, I found myself upon my knees before him.

'Not that, dearest boy! Anything but that! Things are bad enough already. Do not make them worse by destroying your reason, when you never had more need of it. William, if you bring it—I will never forgive you.'

'Please not, my lord,' echoed William.

'Lord Hartover, I do not rise, or let you go, till you promise me not to send for any liquor——'

He struggled so violently to get away from me, that he threw me against a table. Bruised as I was, every touch hurt me, and I uttered a cry of pain. This brought him to himself.

He burst into a violent flood of tears, lifted me up tenderly, and helped me to a chair entreating pardon.

'I do need my reason indeed; but I have none left. Help me with yours. What shall I do?'

'Try at least to be calm,' I said.

'But I cannot. I will leave this house. I cannot face the insults which I know are coming.'

'Your father will never insult you.'

'How do you know that, Brownlow? And if he does not, he will let that Halidane insult me—set him on to do it—and to insult you, too. Oh, my dear old man, what have I done? I have ruined you.'

'Who can tell?' I said. I had not yet made up my mind what course I should pursue, if—as was most probable—I lost my position.—What matter? God would provide. 'But as for leaving this house, you must not.'

'I must.'

'If your lordship goes I go with you, to the world's end,' quoth William.

'You must neither of you go. I will never give my consent, never.'

'Why?'

'Because it would be wrong. No son has a right, under age as you are, to run away from his father's house. Still less before you have faced the worst. You cannot tell what turn events may take. The whole storm may blow over, for aught we know. And then how ashamed you would be at having been conquered by fear!'

'Fear?' he repeated scornfully.

'Yes, fear. To be afraid of being insulted is every bit as cowardly as being afraid of being wounded, or of suffering any other bodily pain or shock.'

'But my honour?'

'A man's duty is his honour, whatever else is not. Do your duty, and your honour will take care of itself. And your duty, to-day, is to remain here and listen, like a good son, to whatever your father has to say to you.'

'Please, gentlemen—my lord,' William put in, 'why not send for the colonel and tell him the whole story?'

'Why not?' I said. 'Excellent advice. Let us lay the matter before him at once.'

My reasons for this step were threefold. Colonel Esdaile would approach the matter as a man of the world. His verdict would, to some extent, relieve me of responsibility, and I was near the end of my powers. I sorely needed relief. And, thirdly, I knew for a

fact that he was no friend to Halidane. What influence he possessed he would use, I believed, on the boy's behalf.

I said something to this effect. Hartover looked shrewdly at me.

'Will he? I'm not altogether so sure of that. You don't quite measure the Rusher yet, old man. He's his own book to make, the old fox; and it all depends whether my book suits his.'

And he stood thinking, his face serious, his brows knit.

I could not but think, too, for his words disheartened me, recalling my earlier uneasy sense of the conflicting wills, the conflicting interests, intrigue and possible treachery, which lay below the fair seeming of these fine people and the life of this great house. Lady Longmoor had hinted at it. The boy hinted at it. Halidane had confirmed those hints at a particularly low level. But what of the higher level—did falsehood, self-seeking, scheming reign there equally? Colonel Esdaile stood next in the succession, since Lady Longmoor was childless. It was to his interest, then, that Hartover should not marry at all. True—but the chances of his remaining unmarried were so remote, that it might suit the colonel better to help forward a match of which Lord Longmoor disapproved. If the latter disinherited his son, he—the colonel—might secure a share of the plunder. Why I knew not, but my heart often misgave me that if the earl's innumerable imaginary ailments developed into one real ailment—a thing very possible—if, to be plain, he succeeded, and those about him succeeded in coddling him to death, within as short a time as the decencies of mourning permitted I should see Colonel Esdaile her ladyship's husband. What was their relation to one another now? Gossip, I could not but be aware, had long been busy. Yet my recent conversation with her—her confidences, all she had so touchingly told me—what did these mean? I recoiled in horror, for was I not groping along the edge of a moral abyss compared with which my groping along the edge of that natural abyss, in the darkness of the limestone cavern, two nights ago, became a thing of small moment? Heavens! what a hateful disgusting web it all was for me to have to soil my hands in disentangling. Oh! for my quiet college rooms again, grand old books, and peace.

But the boy was there in utter need, all this while, and something must be done at once. Whatever his ulterior hopes and purposes, there could be no question of the colonel's dislike of Halidane. No question, either, that Halidane was struggling,

whether for himself or his clique, to secure a share of that aforementioned plunder. At this juncture the two plunderers' interests could not run on all fours—therefore I would chance it.

'William is right,' I said at last. 'We will go and talk things over with the colonel.'

I forgot I could not walk. The boy would not leave me. He all but clung to me. William must be our messenger.

CHAPTER XX.

As soon as we were alone Hartover crossed the room, and threw open a casement of one of the long low diamond-paned windows, thereby letting in the chill air drawing down from the distant fells. Letting in, too, the song of the northerly wind among the giant firs—a sad but very noble melody. Dishevelled, his raiment disordered by stress of battle, he stood in his smart high-waisted blue coat, his hands thrust in his breeches pockets, leaning his flushed cheek against the stone mullion, and gazing over gardens, pinery, and stately avenue to where the upward rolling wilderness of rusty indigo moor rose against the quiet sky. He was quite gentle now, subdued and wistful, wearied by the violence of his own passion; and—beautiful exceedingly, as I could not but note. That anyone should have the heart to plot against or strive to injure him, to traffic with his faults or weaknesses to their own advantage, appeared to me past belief. And it seemed these thoughts of mine must have communicated themselves to him, in some way, passing into his mind, for he presently said—

'Why, why can't they be kind to me? Or if that's expecting too much, why can't they let me alone? I don't want to be a blackguard. By heaven, I could be good, should be good, if only they treated me fairly, didn't lay traps for and badger me. Upon my soul, it's as if they wished me to go to the devil and to do wrong. Honestly, I never had a dog's chance till you came, Brownlow. If I'm the young limb of Satan they make me out to be, why do they take so much trouble about keeping me here? Why can't they let me clear out—go away with you, dear old man, and get something to do? After all I've my mother's money, you know. They could hardly take that from me. I don't know exactly how much it is, only a couple of thousand or so a year. But I could manage to scrape along on that for a time, I suppose, until—'

Here Colonel Esdaile swaggered in, genial and laughing, saving me, to my thankfulness, the necessity to reply.

'Well, George, so I hear you've a good day's work to your credit,' he began. 'I hope you gave his oily reverence a thorough dressing down while you were about it.'

'I wish I had killed him,' the boy broke out, firing up again.

'There are little inconveniences about a charge of assault and battery when it ends in the demise of the battered one, I'm afraid. Still I doubt if I should have given my tailor orders for a band of crape on my sleeve. The fellow got no more than he deserves, in my opinion. So my verdict on your conduct is pretty much that of the Irish Bar, when a certain member of it knocked a certain counsellor down in the Town Courts—namely that "nothing could be more reprehensible than Mr. O'Blank's conduct in knocking the counsellor down, except Mr. O'Blank's conduct in letting him get up again." And that, I fancy, will be the verdict of every one—but your father, who—who don't count.'

'I wish I could think he did not, Colonel,' said I.

'Oh! I'll see things are made all right in that quarter,' he declared lightly. 'But now, as to this young lady, George, who is the only really important part of the matter.'

'Who told you there was a young lady?' Hartover asked simply.

'Well, I might have guessed it, old fellow. When men of your age do anything particularly desperate, there is sure to be a petticoat in the case. But, to tell truth, I was in my lady's boudoir when the parson entered.'

'What? Did he not go to my father?'

'Your father was just having his throat rubbed, I understand, with some new quack's Vital Elixir, before driving out in the cold wind, and could not be disturbed. And now he is gone out; so that if we could smother the black fellow in the meantime, all might be well yet.'

'And what did she say?'

'Oh, she? She went into hysterics at the sight of the wounded hero, and became thereby incompetent to offer an opinion on the subject.'

'Rusher!' said the boy, fiercely, 'you're chaffing me. You don't intend to help me.'

'Not to marry that young lady, Hartover,' he said, with a complete change of tone. 'I know she is very lovely, and I daresay she is very good and clever, and all that; and I don't think the

least the worse of you for falling in love with her. As if a man cannot have a passion or two before he's twenty-one ! But as for marrying her, that will never do ; and I am sure Brownlow here, who is a sensible man if ever there was one, feels the same.'

I was thankful the boy was too absorbed by his own emotion to observe the shrug and glance which passed between us. Sincerely, without reference to any stake of my own in the issue, I agreed with the speaker. The idea of such a marriage, as matters now stood, could not be entertained. Yet how was I to tell Hartover so ? Still more, how convince him such a view was the only reasonable and prudent one ?

And here the poor boy broke out with a string of those pathetic and time-honoured commonplaces which each generation repeats in youth and smiles at in maturity. The colonel sat by, listening amusedly ; until, at last, out of good-nature—perhaps out of boredom, too—he rose and, patting the boy on the shoulder, spoke soothingly. 'Leave it all to him, and he would see what could be done—would go down and talk it all over with my lady. Hartover might count on him to stand by him'—and so forth, promising recklessly all I dared not promise, because I was in earnest while he was not. I could see he treated the whole affair as a lad's passing fancy, which had best be humoured, because, if humoured, it would in all probability be forgotten in a few months' time. I began to wonder whether he might not be right. His experience was larger than mine, and I ended by blaming myself for having taken the matter so seriously ; selfishly hoping, in my heart of hearts, that the colonel had gauged the position more truly than I myself had.

He departed leaving us, save for soothing phrases, pretty much where we were before his coming.

The boy looked at the fine swaggering figure as it passed out on to the stair, and said quietly—

'The Rusher is a humbug. He means what he says, now, perhaps ; but he won't do it. He won't take the trouble when it comes to the point, or he'll get talked over. You see if he doesn't. I must just help myself—so—good-bye, old man, for the present.'

'Good-bye ?'

'Yes—I'm going out, and without your leave—mind that. My hat and coat, William. And, William——'

'Yes, my lord,' and the faithful spaniel came.

'Look here—I'm going out without Mr. Brownlow's permission and against his will, and he doesn't know where I am going to.'

William looked at me inquiringly.

'It is too true. For Heaven's sake tell me what you are about ? What is the meaning of this ? You will not——'

'Not run away, I promise you. I shall be back in a couple of hours. You can't catch me, you know, old fellow ; and if you try I'll serve you as I did Halidane.'

He went, forcing a laugh ; returned according to promise, though in somewhat over the two hours, was very silent during dinner, and as soon as it was finished got up from the table.

'I am tired, dear old man,' he said. 'Do you mind if I turn in early to-night ? I want a good sleep.'

At the door he paused, came back, and putting his two hands on my shoulders stood looking down in my face.

'She—Nellie—loves me, though she has refused me,' he said, and his lips quivered. 'Never mind how, but I've found that out. Now I don't care a hang what they do or say. I shall never give her up.'

Mr. Marsigli appeared, grave and courtly—'His lordship desired to speak with Lord Hartover at once.'

CHAPTER XXI.

I HAD passed an agitated day, followed by a sleepless night. Rising early, stiff and crippled though I still was, I hobbled down the winding stairs, out across the terrace and gardens to the great square of stable buildings. I had taken much the same journey on my first morning at Hover, nearly two years before, in all the charm and radiance of May. This was to be, as I had determined, my last morning there. A very different scene, different sentiments and circumstances ; alas for the vanity of human hopes and human wishes !

Hartover's interview with his father had been stormy, the 'sainted' nobleman's form of piety by no means excluding strong feeling or strong language in the expression of it—upon occasion. But the main offence, in all this wretched business, was, I learned, credited to my account. The trouble took its rise in my detestable association with Mr. Braithwaite—whose political opinions stank in the aristocratic nostrils, and of whose daughter's marriage to Hartover I was reported an earnest advocate. I could have laughed at the irony of my own position ; and could easily, as I

thought, see whom I had to thank for it. I found it less easy to decide on the course of action duty commanded me to adopt.

During the course of the day I had requested, even demanded, an interview with Lord Longmoor, so that I might lay my own account of affairs before him. I met with a refusal. It could not be arranged. He was too worried, too upset by all which had occurred. His health made it imperative that he should be spared further discussion and annoyance. So I was condemned unheard, notwithstanding Hartover's entreaties and protests. For the dear boy, I believe, fought my battle bravely, taking all blame upon himself, controlling both tongue and temper lest he should injure my cause by violent or impertinent speech.

I waited until evening before coming to a final decision, for I did not want to act in anger or in pique. Then I wrote to Lord Longmoor, resigning my position as tutor to his son. It was a heavy wrench—but the heavier the wrench the more clear the duty. Looking back, I still think I did right.

Warcop had been my first friend at Hover, and to him I turned in my present distress.

The day had not fairly broken yet. The morning mist hung thick. In it grooms and helpers, but half clothed and half awake, moved to and fro about the stable-yard armed with pitchforks or buckets, calling to one another, whistling, their stunted, crab-legged forms the more ungainly from the trusses of straw and hay borne on their backs. Even before I could distinguish him, I recognised Warcop's voice, rasping and surly, admonishing his subordinates as 'lazy towlers and tykes' in the broadest of his Yorkshire speech.

Seeing me, he held out his hand in silence. I grasped it, with a singular sense of support, even of comfort—for I was shaken by the events of the last three days, and by my sleepless night. I followed him into his *sanctum*—a queer dusky office, hung round with prints and spoils of the stud-farm and the chase, furnished with shelves, too, containing a miscellaneous assortment of professional stores and appliances—which, although in fact scrupulously clean, smelt, I must own, very vilely of horse-medicines, leather, grease, tobacco-smoke, and heaven knows what besides. The stove was alight. He brought forward a Windsor arm-chair, and bade me sit down near it.

'For 'tis chill,' he said, 'an' ye're no too grand on your legs yet. But I kened you coom, sir, gin you could walk, so bid to

make t' fire 'oop. Seeing it were best, an' coom you could, we should ha' our crack here than i' the house—for 'odds, sir, walls have ears at Hover, if ears walls ever had.'

'Too true, Warcop,' I answered, sadly enough. 'So you have heard what has happened?'

'And more than's happened, as like as not.'

'Most probably,' I said.

'And the upshot of it a' is ye leave Hover?'

'How can I do otherwise? My presence here can only increase the breach between Lord Hartover and his father, as long as the earl believes I encourage the boy in his affection for Miss Braithwaite. I can only give you my word that, until the day before yesterday, when Lord Hartover spoke to me about the matter himself, I had not the faintest suspicion he had ever given the young lady a thought.'

'Better give her a thought than some nearer home,' quoth Warcop. 'But t' story goes the lass has been setting her cap at him these three months past.'

'Then the story is a very wicked lie,' I answered. 'I have been with him constantly, and I know that, at most, he has spoken to her thrice. Who has dared to set that rumour afloat? I advise them to have a care, for if Lord Hartover hears of it they will assuredly meet with the same fate at his hands as Mr. Halidane did two days ago.'

Warcop chuckled.

'Deed, but t' lad put up a bonny fight!' he said with evident relish. 'An' that's to your credit, sir, for ye've kept him fra t' drink, kept him clean body an' sowl, and gotten far to make a man o' him—God bless you for it, an' He will. But it's sair news ye're leaving us, for t' lad's young in clean ways yet. Can ye trust him to stan' alone? Trust him, an' ye're gone, to keep straight?'

'I don't know, I don't know,' I cried, putting my hands over my face. 'There you touch me home, Warcop. That's where the whole thing cuts me. Still I only forestall our parting by a few months, for her ladyship tells me he is to join the Life Guards next spring in any case. Lord Longmoor had already determined he should do so, and this unfortunate business will assuredly make him more resolute the boy should leave home than ever.'

Warcop remained silent for a good couple of minutes. He screwed up his mouth, scratched his head.

'I've tried an' I've tried,' he said at last; 'an' it beats me. I can't fathom it. Between puking fools and canting knaves, and fly-by-night wantons and rakes, what is't they want to do wi' t' lad?'

I started; for had I not asked myself just that question, though in less unvarnished language, a hundred times? Had not Hartover, indeed, asked it himself?

'Is it that you cannot, or that you will not, fathom it, Warcop?' I said, scenting his Yorkshire caution and trying to bring him to the point. For I felt if any man living could explain the ugly problem he could.

'Nay, nay,' he answered, looking me full in the face. 'I'd tell ye, gin I kenned myself, fast enough, an' it would help you or t' lad. But I dinna, sir, though most ungodly fears ha' crossed my mind. But this I can tell ye, there's some new game up betwixt Mamzell and Mr. Marsigli, ever since my lady had them both up to town wi' her last Whitsun. By times they're as thick as thieves'—he dwelt on the last word meaningly. 'By times they fight like cat and dog, or'—he glanced at me—'like man and wife, sir.'

I pressed him to be explicit; and he told me that in his opinion Marsigli had some hold over Mademoiselle Fédore, against which she rebelled. It was she who had put about the evil story concerning Nellie Braithwaite's efforts to entrap Hartover. Did she intend to make her profit out of the business, and did Marsigli stand in the way of her carrying out that intention? A violent quarrel had taken place between the couple, upon whom Warcop had come, unexpectedly, in one of the shrubberies near the stables in the dusk last evening. It had gone forward in mixed French and Italian, so that he could gather little of the actual subject under discussion; but Hartover's name had occurred, and so had mine.

'An' the French she-devil flounced off in a fine taking, an' cannoned right into me round t' corner o' a yew hedge, which sobered her a bit, I promise you,' Warcop added, with a chuckle.

But time pressed. I dared not linger. The mail stopped at the Longmoor Hunt Inn at ten o'clock, and I had to make my final preparations before getting Warcop to drive me there to meet it. For I had settled to go straight back to Cambridge and talk over everything—save one thing which should lie secret in my own heart—with the kind old Master and ask his advice. I had spent but little of my salary, and had more than enough in hand to supply all my simple wants ntil I could find work. Yet the

future, I confess, looked very black. My hopes were dashed, my promised security had vanished. In leaving Hover I left, not only comfort, many interests and pleasures, a spacious and stately way of life, but the human beings who were dearest to me on earth. I dared not dwell upon that, lest it should unman me completely. I must cut my farewells as short as possible. To Hartover I represented our separation as temporary—a fiction, as I knew, but a pardonable one under the circumstances.

He wanted, dear boy, to drive me to the little country town and see me off. But I implored him to spare both himself and me this added wretchedness. Let me go quietly, alone with Warcop. Let there be no demonstration, no fuss. All that he said to me, in his loving generous way, I remember and always shall remember. Undeserved, exaggerated though I knew it to be, it went far to sweeten my very bitter cup. He broke down utterly at last, flung his arms round me and cried upon my breast, promising me, like a child, that he 'would be good,' be good, forsooth, until I came back.

And I left him in the study, where we had spent so many and such varied hours together—and thus, in disappointment and apparent failure, closed that eventful section of my life.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND now I was safe back at Cambridge again. Safe in my own old rooms, among my old friends, welcomed with open arms by the good Master and Fellows. To the Master I told my tale, both of success and failure—only not mentioning my own affair of the heart. That was my private joy, my private sorrow, to be told to no man, no counsellor, however benevolent and sympathetic. And both sympathetic and benevolent the dear old Master proved himself. He made arrangements by which all College fees were lessened, and—out of his own pocket—paid certain charges, so that I need make but slight inroad upon my little capital. I was touched and astonished by his generosity and the affection he showed me. Had I been his son, he could hardly have taken warmer interest in my well-being.

But if I was astonished by the Master's generosity, I was still more astonished by a letter which reached me ere the week was out from none other than Lady Longmoor herself.

She was '*toute éplorée*,' she wrote, 'at my departure, but admired me for it. It was just like me, acting from too high a sense of honour. She knew it was hopeless to ask me to return.'

Why not try, whether hopeless or not, by experiment—I thought.

'Perhaps while his lordship was still under the influence of recent painful scenes I had better not return. All she and her dear George could do was to show their gratitude to me in a practical way for the many' etc., etc. And there was a cheque for my salary to the year's end and a hundred pounds more. I was to 'draw on Lord Longmoor's bankers for a hundred each year until I left Cambridge. This was her dear George's plan, so I need feel no hesitation in accepting it. He insisted on my going back to College—'

I pondered long over this letter. It had evidently been composed with great care; and though here and there a word was, of course, misspelt, it was a far more brilliant specimen of English prose than I had ever before seen from the same hand. What time and trouble it must have cost the poor lady, thought I! Plainly she considered herself a little in my power, and was willing to keep on good terms with me.

But my surprise knew no bounds when I came to this post-script:—'I may tell you in confidence that I have called at Mere Ban and seen the lovely shepherdess. Such beauty! Such grace! Such simplicity! Such sensibility! When I looked at her how could I but sympathise'—this word she had much deformed—'with dearest Hartover! What would I not do to help him? We must trust that all will turn out well yet. At least, whatever happens, we know that he has a friend in you.'

Doubtless—but what could have induced her to look favourably on a marriage between her stepson and Nellie? I puzzled my poor brains over this extraordinary development for many days, but found myself no nearer to a rational solution than when I started. However, I knew enough of the fair siren, by now, to be suspicious of her enthusiasm and encouragement and, muttering to myself, '*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*,' I left honest time to unravel the mystery.

And so I settled back into the University routine. Sat in the same lecture-rooms, contended with the same problems, took my constitutional along the same Wrangler's Walk, or watched the moonlight shadows among the same noble elms, trying to forget

the experiences of the last two years and take up college life again where I had left it. Impossible. In those two years of actual time I had grown ten years older. I had gone out a simple lad. I had come back, if not a man of the world, at least a man forced by circumstance into self-resolve and self-restraint, prudence and—shall I say?—cunning. Yes, I had seen the world. And dearly had I bought the sight. The price was that burning fire within, the fire of a hopeless love which consumed me night and day. True, it was hopeless. But there is a love which no more needs hope to feed it than the presence of the beloved one—a love which, self-lighted and inextinguishable, burns on for ever without other fuel than the brain of its victim. Not that I indulged my fancy. Not that I played weakly and luxuriously with any thoughts of what might have been. I thrust them from me sternly, fiercely, and threw myself into my reading, and read, and over-read. It was simply that her face, her voice, her every gesture, never left my imagination—I had almost said, my retina—for one moment of time. During the severest mathematical thought, as during the seemingly soundest sleep, I was always conscious of her. I struggled, I prayed, to put the image away. But when, after many struggles and many prayers, I found that it would not vanish, I let it be. Had God put it there? If so, who was I to fight against God? And, if so, was it not there for a purpose? Was I not doomed thus always to bear her in mind, that I might be of use to her hereafter? That thought sprang up within me and gave me new life. Hitherto I had been reading without any high or even clear purpose, from mere mental activity, emulation, the desire of a fellowship and a competence; but now I began to read for her. I took my degree and a very good one—thank Heaven and my worthy tutors—for her. I went into Holy Orders six months later; and when, within eighteen months of leaving Hover, found myself a Fellow and junior tutor, I had still the paradoxical instinct that, in that capacity, I was working for her of whom I had heard but once since I left the north.

But once;—for, to go back and take things according to the order of time, I received from Braithwaite, within a month of my return to Cambridge, the following letter:—

‘MY DEAR BROWNLOW,—I am sorry to part with you; but part, I fear, I must. You still belong to that Hartover faction, and must continue to do so. It is your interest to keep well with them; and I happen to know that you stand rather better with

them than ever. You went off like a brave lad, as you always were, and I like you for it. So do they; for now they can gallop away to the devil comfortably, without having you to preach to them. Any rational people would have asked you to come back; but Lords and Ladies can't be expected to behave like ordinary sane human beings. Besides, I suppose you have still in your head some fantastical chivalrous notion of saving that poor young fool. He is gone into the Guards, and hence I suppose to the dogs. Anyway, your path and mine lie in opposite directions for my poor Nellie's sake. Don't be angry with me. I've learnt a lot from you, and I flatter myself you've learnt something from me; and, if I could have you without *them*, there is no man on earth I would sooner see at my table. But, as it is, I have thrown up my farm here. Made a capital bargain, too, with the incoming tenant, and am going to farm elsewhere—I won't tell even you where. By the bye, I had an amusing interview with that old ape of an Earl. I got admitted, on his hearing that I wanted to give up the farm; told him plainly that I did not think it good to stay in the neighbourhood after what had happened, at which he vouchsafed to say that I had behaved like a gentleman. But when I let him know—as I took care to do—that I had quite as much objection to his son's marrying my daughter as he himself could have, I “touched his witness,” as we Quakers used to say, a little too shrewdly and put him into a boiling rage. The miserable lump of pride wanted me, forsooth, to look on it all as a mighty honour, and leave him all the glory of despising me. So I told him it was a strange world where two men must needs quarrel just because they agreed exactly, and bowed myself out.

‘God bless you. You will prosper wherever you are, and die a fat pluralist with three livings and a stall. Nellie sends her best love.’

Her best love? I knew better. And perhaps he knew better too; but it was a comfort to think that she remembered me kindly.

Then came letters from the dear boy. At first frequent, affectionate, even passionate; always full of Nellie, and tearing my heart-strings thereby. But after a while they grew fewer, and, though by almost imperceptible degrees, colder. What wonder? I saw that his affection for me was dying out before the influx of new scenes, new hopes and pleasures alas! For he was in the Guards now, and in the thickest whirl of London life. At last his letters ceased entirely, and over a year passed without a line. I tried to find out from the Master how he was going on. But he knew nothing.

'Lord Hartover was very much admired, he believed, in society, and very successful.' Anything more the good man could not, or would not, tell me.

My heart was very heavy when his letters ceased, for still the boy charmed me. The thought of his beauty, his natural cleverness, the gallant way he had with him, the great destiny to which he was called—could he but meet and rise to it—captivated my imagination. I was jealous of his affection, jealous of his remembrance; and now it seemed he had forgotten me and that I had passed altogether out of his life. I could only trust and pray that he had not forgotten all I had taught him likewise; but that some lessons of chivalry, duty, self-respect and self-restraint had sunk deep enough into the foundations of his mind and character to save him from the fate of Alcibiades, which I had always dreaded for him. I, at least, never forgot him. Night and morning, through those lonely waiting years, I prayed for him—and for her whom he loved, though to my own so great discomfiture and loss.

Had he forgotten her too? I wondered. Sometimes I hoped he had; that his was merely a boy's passion which, lightly coming, would also lightly go and leave her free. Free for me? Ah, selfish and disloyal thought! For I was pursued by the belief—though it may seem a far-fetched folly—that in forgetting her he would become a worse and weaker man. That love for her might hold him to one ennobling purpose; while, letting slip that purpose, he might drift down into base promiscuous pleasures, and end, too likely, in some loveless *mariage de convenance* blunting to all the finer sensibilities and aspirations of his nature and his soul. How many scores of worldly scheming mothers were even now baiting their hooks to catch him; careless whether, once they had secured a daughter's position, a title and great wealth, that daughter found herself neglected for women of no repute. Hundreds of young men, in the great world to which Hartover belonged, ran that ugly course, and why not he?

And this thing, also, troubled me, adding to my heaviness of heart, and thereby, perhaps perversely feeding, my secret passion. For I believed that, even though he forgot Nellie, she would not forget him. I knew, or fancied I knew, her strength and steadfastness too well. Once giving her love, she gave it for good and all. I should, indeed, have been sorry, ashamed—paradoxical as it may seem—that she should forget him. It would have lowered her in my eyes, and that I could not bear. So it became an integral

element of my fantastic inner life to conceive of her loving him as deeply, eternally, even though hopelessly, as I loved her. I knew, or believed I knew, her love was pure, that no stain of selfishness or ambition was upon it—that she would have felt for him all that she now felt had he been a simple yeoman, one of her own class and social kin. And as long as I could believe this, her love for Hartover threw a fresh grace and glory round the dear image which I worshipped.

No—whatever happened she must love him wholly and solely still, and I must find a mystic delight in my own despair.

Meanwhile, something happened which vexed me a little at first, amused me much after a while, and finally became of very serious moment both to myself and to others.

(To be continued.)

These verses began to come to me in Italian when walking one day among the Pentland Hills, and clamoured for pencil and a bit of paper. I implored them to present themselves in English, knowing full well how great are the dangers of versification in a foreign tongue, but they would not, and continued to dictate themselves in Italian. I had to obey. Their imperfections are due, not

ITALIA NUOVA, 1915.

Non più lodar l'Italiche prodezze
 Per lusingar la vanità pueril!
 Non più cantar l'Ausoniche bellezze
 Per cattivar un' alma femminil!
 Volgi uno sguardo più profondo
 Giù nel fondo
 Del mio cuor!
 Da mille petti ci proruppe,
 Quando marciavano le truppe,
 'Civis Romanus sum'
 In guerriero cor!

Donna non druda, donzello non bagascio,
 Pari fra pari
 Esser vo';
 Sangue gentil non può portar il fascio
 Di pietosi complimenti, nò!

Madre antica, sorella neonata,
 Io vengo a voi, e voi venite a me;
 La civiltà che vi ho seminata
 Congiunga i nostri cuori in una fè.

Non per dipingere lo mappamondo,
 Nè far sicchè Superbia si rinverda,
 Ma per salvar il focolar fecondo
 Combattiamo, acciocchè non si disperda
 La secolar coltura che fu Roma,
 E degli antichi nomi
 Tutto il loro ver e vivido aroma,
 Sicchè la nuova falsa non la domi.

to the inspirer, but to the defects of the recording machine. I gave them to my friend, Lord Dundas, who loves Italy as I do. In two days he brought me an English version, substantially as here printed : together we dedicate both to Italy.

HORATIO F. BROWN.

NEW ITALY, 1915.

Laud ye no more Italia's prowess old,
 Flattering my fancy with a tale that's told ;
 No more Ausonia's arts and beauties sing,
 To give my woman-soul a pleasuring !
 Look deeper in my heart,
 Deep to its inmost part !
 Hark ! how my marching warriors come,
 The tramp of hosts, the shout,
 Full-chorused bursting out,
 ' Civis Romanus sum ! '

This would I will to be,
 Equal 'mongst equals free ;
 Woman, not lover's toy,
 Virile, not half-sexed boy ;
 No more the servile load my soul can bear
 Of unctuous homage, flattery to the fair,
 Half-pitying courtesy,
 No more for me !

Your mother of old, your sister-babe new-born,
 To you, ye others, I come ; come ye to me !
 Be not our ancient fealty forsworn,
 But from my fecund seed,
 Broadcast through many a cultured century,
 Raise we the fine flower of our common creed.

Up ! sons of mine ; join we the fight !
 Not just to paint the globe a different hue,
 Not that Pride's mantle may be decked anew,
 But to preserve that fruitful hearth and home,
 The Culture of the ages that was Rome,
 The grand ancestral names, their light
 And perfume in the days when hearts rang true,
 Lest alien standards false prevail outright.

Ed ora su per le vallate avverse
Dove stillano le acque,
Fonti non nostre d' ogni nostro fiume,
Rompendo la finta frontiera
Urge la schiera
Delle vittoriose piume.
Le nitide falde del Cevedale,
Le nevi terse—
Gioielli del Tonale—
Ci chiamano; e quando il cannone tacque,
Passata la ventura,
Mondi allor di pensiero vile
Acquisteremo—non più miopi talpi
Nelle trincee della vita mortale—
I quattro doni che serbano le Alpi
Ad ogni spirto gentile,
Pace e Libertà, Gioia con Alma pura :

O più in là, verso l'Oriente,
Ove, al piede della vetta
Arida, ardua e renitente,
Che ci aspetta,
Dalle fonti nascose sorge
Il limpido Timavo, che disseta
Trieste trasognata,
L'agognata
Meta,
E ci porge
Un simbolo della patria virtude,
Pegno perenne della fede sana,
Che l'Italia, immortale come il fiume,
Nasce, rinasce, risorge, riassume
Tutta la gloria
Della sua passata storia,
Ed ora—non più poltre—
Quando avant' agli occhi suoi si dischiude
L'immenso mar della speranza umana,
Ella non tarderà d' andar più oltre.

HORATIO F. BROWN.

See! yonder now, breasting the vale's incline,
Bright-plumed in war's array
My conquering squadrons gay
Press upwards through that false-forged frontier-line
That dares to sever in their course
Italy's own rivers from the source
That gives them birth in soil that should be mine.
I hear the call from Cevedale's steep,
From storm-scourged crag, from glittering snowdrift deep,—
Tonale's jewelled crown—I hear the call.
Then, come the day, when hushed the cannon's roar,
The awful venture safely o'er,
Then, then, and once for all,
Our spirits purged, no longer moles, purblind,
In fateful trenches of this fight confined,
We shall secure
Those four great gifts the mighty mountains hold
For spirits cast in gentle mould,
Freedom and Peace, Joy and the Soul that's pure.

Or eastward look! where, 'neath yon frowning crest
That menaces our way, from secret rills
Thy limpid flood, Timavo, springs
And to Trieste,
Our longed-for, dreamed-of goal, assuaging brings
The draught that cures her of her alien ills.
A sign, Timavo, and a symbol sure
Art thou, that, firm in faith which shall endure,
Italia, immortal as thy river,
Born and reborn, resurgent, shall for ever
Assume again the glory
Of her unrivalled story,
And, stately, unafraid—
Before her eyes displayed
Of human hopes the immense, the boundless sea—
March forward, steadfast, to her destiny.

DAVID DUNDAS.

YPRES:

'QUOMODO SEDET SOLA CIVITAS.'

BY DR. DEARMER.

'I KNOW this place'll be the death of me,' said the Colonel, 'but I can't keep away from it. There's never been such a thing to see in the world.' Our horses picked their way for a mile over villainous fields, and slippery ditches, and trampled quagmires. Overhead, aeroplanes of various nationalities swam through the air, and a Fokker passed, high up, looking like a beautiful white moth. The day was perfect, and there were no clouds but the little white puffs of shrapnel. All round was the drumming of hidden guns; my horse leapt at each near report, resenting especially a small weapon of ours with a peculiarly sharp and vicious bark that sounded all day as if it were just behind us. After two miles on the high road, shells began to scream laboriously overhead, and to fall with great accuracy on the defences of a battery 200 yards beyond the road. 'Coal-boxes,' said the Colonel, between the crashes; 'it's all right if there aren't any short ones.' I hoped the enemy would maintain the high standard of their shooting, and not send any short ones. The men of our own battery were no doubt comfortably smoking in their dug-outs, waiting for the storm to pass. The pandemonium continued, as we drew level with the area where the bursts of black smoke were rising. 'I think we had better trot,' said the Colonel.

Ypres was a haven of peace that day when we reached it—peace, and such utter desolation as surely has been never seen before. I have seen villages in Macedonia that had been burnt out five or six years ago when the Turk ruled over that unhappy land; but here was a whole city—a compact, self-contained little city, mediævally established within its own ramparts, and now ground into such ruins as no Vandals of old time could ever have accomplished. They were clumsy creatures after all, those old scourges of humanity, with their swords and torches; but here every wonder of modern science had been concentrated on the work of methodical destruction. The inventions which we used to worship, when learned men pointed to them and said 'These be

thy gods, O Israel!'—the science which was to save and regenerate the world—were here seen for what they are, a huge non-moral force, which is only good or bad in so far as it is used for good or bad ends, a mercenary which is ready to help, or deprave, or destroy mankind, as its masters bid, and which can never regenerate anything unless it is in the hands of people who are themselves regenerate. I think of all the clever people before the war who said that religion was played out, and that science was about to accomplish all the things which the prophets and philosophers had failed to do, as I stand among these pitiable ruins, with the noises of hell affronting the sky. The houses in many parts are so completely destroyed that one cannot tell whether they were private flats or shops, whether they were old Flemish homes with high-stepped gables or only ugly modern substitutes: photographs show many such lovely old houses grouped round the great square, but these are only heaps of bricks now; the bishop's house alone is standing, through some slight error of German gunnery, and I could only find one other building in the town that was almost unscathed. One could not even discover what the shops had been used for, in those instances where the walls still remained: all names and street signs had been burnt or blasted away, and only here and there did a barrel and pump or a butcher's block show that this crumbling shell was once an estaminet, and that a butcher's shop. The very streets seemed to have disappeared, covered by the debris; and one walked along winding paths between rubbish heaps, from which there often projected a pipe with a gas-meter fixed to the top. I did not know before to-day that gas-meters are the most durable part of a house.

One corner of the Cathedral tower still stands at its full height, a soaring ruin, graceful and delicate, hinting at some new style of architecture, a new type of needle-like structure that is neither tower nor spire. That unforgettable fragment, and the belfry by the Cloth Hall, which still looks square and sturdy from the side where its ruin is unseen, are the first one sees of Ypres a couple of miles away; and sometimes there are little glimpses of these two monuments among the fields from the camps at a greater distance. From the square itself the tower seems very high, and very white in the soft sunlight of this lovely day—still paler is it under the moon—like some queen of an old story, innocent and pure, and very quiet and tender in her tragedy.

To enter the Cathedral is to climb on to the top of a hill of

rubbish where the fallen pillars lie like strings of millstones, as they lie at the Parthenon. Nowhere does one touch the floor. After a while one says 'That is, after all, the choir, and there was the high altar, and here were chapels with bronze screens.' The splendid vestries are intact; they are filled with a tangle of great candlesticks, banner-poles, chairs, cupboards, and a few broken painted images. Just outside the vestry is a large pond, broadening at either end, full of green water and deep enough for drowning. 'Two Jack Johnsons,' says the Colonel. The principal side of the Cloth Hall still remains, not irremediably damaged; but one trembles for it, as if it were a living friend left to stand day and night in peril.

The abomination of desolation! The words of the old prophets are actual again to-day, for the things which they described are done again, and outdone. Babylon has come up from the east to battle against the holy places. All is silent, except for a man in khaki here and there, for very few civilians are ever allowed to enter the city of ruins. It is like Pompeii, only that there are greater contrasts—more utter ruin in some places, and more towering relics in others. I saw a dozen soldiers half-naked at their toilet in a house whose walls hardly emerged from the ground, within sight of the Cathedral, and was astonished till I remembered that there are no women within three miles of the place. Yet here a few months ago cabs and motor cars threaded their way among the traffic, and gaily dressed folk jostled one another on the pavement; and along each street men went after their business and sought their friends: and each of these houses was the place that somebody called 'home'—houses that are sometimes a mound to-day, the grave of a home, and sometimes like the dolls' houses of our childhood, whose fronts came off and disclosed the intimacies of their little rooms.

Many troops had to march through Ypres to get to the front, and just outside one gate there is a region called the Devil's Corner where the trees have been blasted away. But the ramparts hold good behind the wide moat that encircles the city; for these relics of ancient fortification still have their use, and enable the garrison to live in safety, and almost in comfort. Just inside another gate there is a hole in the middle of the road, and no one has troubled to fence it round, since all know their way about, though the ominous sound of rushing water promises a horrible fate for the unwary walker. At the side of another street we came upon a

grave with this inscription on the wooden cross, '*R.I.P. In loving memory of two unknown friends*,' and in another lettering the unfinished addition, '*civi belgiques*.' Who were these, among the unknown dead? Will anyone ever know?

A little farther on, some soldiers were playing in the remains of a street, and one of them was wearing a battered top-hat that he had found. This raised a question of etiquette. Would he raise his right hand smartly to the rim of the silk hat, or would he merely stand at attention? Or—a further alternative—would he gracefully raise his hat to the Colonel? He chose another and a better way, and, turning his back on us, began a careful study of the shrapnel holes in the wall. Then we walked on between an avenue of dead young trees, and past a church, all the walls of which are still standing, and under a large crucifix on the wall, which is unmarked by a single bullet, though all round it, and even the Mary and John on either side, are pitted with shrapnel; and we passed the ruins of schools and churches, barracks and the post-office, and ruined gardens, grass-grown, seen through battered walls, till we came to a cellar which is an officers' mess, the only storey left to a mansion that has disappeared—a dark, low cellar, full of cheerful young men.

There is no place like Ypres in the world—nothing so sad and nothing so beautiful. For all the squalid and sordid things are gone; there are no slums, no filthy hovels, no brawling or greasy sensuality, no crying in the streets: the city is very pure and quiet, and white under the sun, a dusty oasis of silence amid the drumming of the guns.

Yet one realises how lovable a thing is humanity, with all its stains, and the common life of the tavern and the streets, and all the littleness of the average home, when one sees this beautiful loneliness, the chaste and awful grandeur of these ruins, softly crumbling under the sun, and the wonderful fantasy of this fretted architecture—proud remnants of famous halls, still lifting themselves high in the ancient moated city, which stands in the midst of the tumbled graveyard that we call to-day the Salient of Ypres.

It will be rebuilt some day. The ancient houses are gone for the most part, never to return; but there is enough—at present—left of the Cloth Hall, and even of the Cathedral, to make its restoration no difficult matter. Restoration is an ugly word, but the corner of the great Cathedral tower cannot remain for

ever as it is: either it will have to be pulled down, or else it must be rebuilt by the reproduction of its missing walls. And one hopes for a new era of architecture and of town planning, in the building up of Belgium and Poland and Serbia.

But I think that when the war is over Ypres will at first be kept a guarded sanctuary within its moated battlements for all the world to see. And all America will go to visit it, and all the neutral peoples; and they will realise what we fought for and why the fate of Christendom depended upon our conquering. France and Britain, too, will troop to see it—and Belgium; such troops of pilgrims as have never been seen before—multitudes among them wearing black.

ENOCH SOAMES.

A MEMORY OF THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES.

BY MAX BEERBOHM.

WHEN a book about the literature of the eighteen-nineties was given by Mr. Holbrook Jackson to the world, I looked eagerly in the index for *Soames, Enoch*. It was as I feared. He was not there. But everybody else was. Many writers whom I had quite forgotten, or remembered but faintly, lived again for me, they and their work, in Mr. Holbrook Jackson's pages. The book was as thorough as it was brilliantly written. And thus the omission found by me was an all the deadlier record of poor Soames' failure to impress himself on his decade.

I daresay I am the only person who noticed the omission. Soames had failed so piteously as all that ! Nor is there a counterpoise in the thought that if he had had some measure of success he might have passed, like those others, out of my mind, to return only at the historian's beck. It is true that had his gifts, such as they were, been acknowledged in his life-time, he would never have made the bargain I saw him make—that strange bargain whose results have kept him always in the foreground of my memory. But it is from those very results that the full piteousness of him glares out.

Not my compassion, however, impels me to write of him. For his sake, poor fellow, I should be inclined to keep my pen out of the ink. It is ill to deride the dead. And how can I write about Enoch Soames without making him ridiculous ? Or rather, how am I to hush up the horrid fact that he *was* ridiculous ? I shall not be able to do that. Yet, sooner or later, write about him I must. You will see, in due course, that I have no option. And I may as well get the thing done now.

In the Summer Term of '93 a bolt from the blue flashed down on Oxford. It drove deep, it hurtlingly embedded itself in the soil. Dons and undergraduates stood around, rather pale, discussing nothing but it. Whence came it, this meteorite ? From Paris. Its name ? Will Rothenstein. Its aim ? To do a series of twenty-four portraits in lithograph. These were to be published from the Bodley Head, London. The matter was urgent. Already the Warden of A, and the Master of B, and the Regius Professor of C

had meekly 'sat.' Dignified and doddering old men, who had never consented to sit to anyone, could not withstand this dynamic little stranger. He did not sue : he invited ; he did not invite : he commanded. He was twenty-one years old. He wore spectacles that flashed more than any other pair ever seen. He was a wit. He was brimful of ideas. He knew Whistler. He knew Edmond de Goncourt. He knew everyone in Paris. He knew them all by heart. He was Paris in Oxford. It was whispered that, so soon as he had polished off his selection of dons, he was going to include a few undergraduates. It was a proud day for me when I—I—was included. I liked Rothenstein not less than I feared him ; and there arose between us a friendship that has grown ever warmer, and been more and more valued by me, with every passing year.

At the end of Term he settled in—or rather, meteorically into—London. It was to him I owed my first knowledge of that forever enchanting little world-in-itself, Chelsea, and my first acquaintance with Walter Sickert and other august elders who dwelt there. It was Rothenstein that took me to see, in Cambridge Street, Pimlico, a young man whose drawings were already famous among the few—Aubrey Beardsley, by name. With Rothenstein I paid my first visit to the Bodley Head. By him I was inducted into another haunt of intellect and daring, the domino room of the Café Royal.

There, on that October evening—there, in that exuberant vista of gilding and crimson velvet set amidst all those opposing mirrors and upholding caryatids, with fumes of tobacco ever rising to the painted and pagan ceiling, and with the hum of presumably cynical conversation broken into so sharply now and again by the clatter of dominoes shuffled on marble tables, I drew a deep breath, and 'This indeed,' said I to myself, 'is life !'

It was the hour before dinner. We drank vermouth. Those who knew Rothenstein were pointing him out to those who knew him only by name. Men were constantly coming in through the swing doors and wandering slowly up and down in search of vacant tables, or of tables occupied by friends. One of these rovers interested me because I was sure he wanted to catch Rothenstein's eye. He had twice passed our table, with a hesitating look ; but Rothenstein, in the thick of a disquisition on Puvis de Chavannes, had not seen him. He was a stooping, shambling person, rather tall, very pale, with longish and brownish hair. He had a thin vague beard—or rather, he had a chin on which a large number of hairs weakly

curled and clustered to cover its retreat. He was an odd-looking person ; but in the 'nineties odd apparitions were more frequent, I think, than they are now. The young writers of that era—and I was sure this man was a writer—strove earnestly to be distinct in aspect. This man had striven unsuccessfully. He wore a soft black hat of clerical kind but of Bohemian intention, and a grey waterproof cape which, perhaps because it was waterproof, failed to be romantic. I decided that 'dim' was the *mot juste* for him. I had already essayed to write, and was immensely keen on the *mot juste*, that Holy Grail of the period.

The dim man was now again approaching our table, and this time he made up his mind to pause in front of it. 'You don't remember me,' he said in a toneless voice.

Rothenstein brightly focussed him. 'Yes, I do,' he replied after a moment, with pride rather than effusion—pride in a retentive memory. 'Edwin Soames.'

'Enoch Soames,' said Enoch.

'Enoch Soames,' repeated Rothenstein in a tone implying that it was enough to have hit on the surname. 'We met in Paris two or three times when you were living there. We met at the Café Groche.'

'And I came to your studio once.'

'Oh yes ; I was sorry I was out.'

'But you were in. You showed me some of your paintings, you know. . . . I hear you're in Chelsea now.'

'Yes.'

I almost wondered that Mr. Soames did not, after this monosyllable, pass along. He stood patiently there, rather like a dumb animal, rather like a donkey looking over a gate. A sad figure, his. It occurred to me that 'hungry' was perhaps the *mot juste* for him ; but—hungry for what ? He looked as if he had little appetite for anything. I was sorry for him ; and Rothenstein, though he had not invited him to Chelsea, did ask him to sit down and have something to drink.

Seated, he was more self-assertive. He flung back the wings of his cape with a gesture which—had not those wings been waterproof—might have seemed to hurl defiance at things in general. And he ordered an absinthe. '*Je me tiens toujours fidèle*,' he told Rothenstein, '*à la sorcière glauque*.'

'It is bad for you,' said Rothenstein dryly.

'Nothing is bad for one,' answered Soames. '*Dans ce monde il n'y a ni de bien ni de mal*.'

'Nothing good and nothing bad? How do you mean?'

'I explained it all in the preface to "Negations."'

'"Negations"?''

'Yes; I gave you a copy of it.'

'Oh yes, of course. But did you explain—for instance—that there was no such thing as bad or good grammar?'

'N-no,' said Soames. 'Of course in Art there is the good and the evil. But in Life—no.' He was rolling a cigarette. He had weak white hands, not well washed, and with finger-tips much stained by nicotine. 'In Life there are illusions of good and evil, but'—his voice trailed away to a murmur in which the words 'vieux jeu' and 'rococo' were faintly audible. I think he felt he was not doing himself justice, and feared that Rothenstein was going to point out fallacies. Anyhow, he cleared his throat and said '*Parlons d'autre chose.*'

It occurs to you that he was a fool? It didn't to me. I was young, and had not the clarity of judgment that Rothenstein already had. Soames was quite five or six years older than either of us. Also, he had written a book.

It was wonderful to have written a book.

If Rothenstein had not been there, I should have revered Soames. Even as it was, I respected him. And I was very near indeed to reverence when he said he had another book coming out soon. I asked if I might ask what kind of book it was to be.

'My poems,' he answered. Rothenstein asked if this was to be the title of the book. The poet meditated on this suggestion, but said he rather thought of giving the book no title at all. 'If a book is good in itself—' he murmured, waving his cigarette.

Rothenstein objected that absence of title might be bad for the sale of a book. 'If,' he urged, 'I went into a bookseller's and said simply "Have you got?" or "Have you a copy of?" how would they know what I wanted?'

'Oh, of course I should have my name on the cover,' Soames answered earnestly. 'And I rather want,' he added, looking hard at Rothenstein, 'to have a drawing of myself as frontispiece.' Rothenstein admitted that this was a capital idea, and mentioned that he was going into the country, and would be there for some time. He then looked at his watch, exclaimed at the hour, paid the waiter, and went away with me to dinner. Soames remained at his post of fidelity to the glaucous witch.

'Why were you so determined not to draw him?' I asked.

'Draw him? Him? How can one draw a man who doesn't exist?'

'He is dim,' I admitted. But my *mot juste* fell flat. Rothenstein repeated that Soames was non-existent.

Still, Soames had written a book. I asked if Rothenstein had read 'Negations.' He said he had looked into it, 'but,' he added crisply, 'I don't profess to know anything about writing.' A reservation very characteristic of the period! Painters would not then allow that anyone outside their own order had a right to any opinion about painting. This law (graven on the tablets brought down by Whistler from the summit of Fujiyama) imposed certain limitations. If other arts than painting were not utterly unintelligible to all but the men who practised them, the law tottered—the Monroe Doctrine, as it were, did not hold good. Therefore no painter would offer an opinion of a book without warning you at any rate that his opinion was worthless. No one is a better judge of literature than Rothenstein; but it wouldn't have done to tell him so in those days; and I knew that I must form an unaided judgment on 'Negations.'

Not to buy a book of which I had met the author face to face would have been for me in those days an impossible act of self-denial. When I returned to Oxford for the Christmas Term I had duly secured 'Negations.' I used to keep it lying carelessly on the table in my room, and whenever a friend took it up and asked what it was about, I would say 'Oh, it's rather a remarkable book. It's by a man whom I know.' Just 'what it was about' I never was able to say. Head or tail was just what I hadn't made of that slim green volume. I found in the preface no clue to the exiguous labyrinth of contents, and in that labyrinth nothing to explain the preface.

'Lean near to life. Lean very near—nearer.

'Life is web, and therein nor warp nor woof is, but web only.

'It is for this I am Catholick in church and in thought, yet do let swift Mood weave there what the shuttle of Mood wills.'

These were the opening phrases of the preface, but those which followed were less easy to understand. Then came 'Stark: A Conte,' about a midinette who, so far as I could gather, murdered, or was about to murder, a mannequin. It was rather like a story by Catulle Mendès in which the translator had either skipped or cut out every alternate sentence. Next, a dialogue between Pan and St. Ursula—lacking, I rather thought, in 'snap.' Next,

some aphorisms (entitled *ἀφορίσματα*). Throughout, in fact, there was a great variety of form; and the forms had evidently been wrought with much care. It was rather the substance that eluded me. Was there, I wondered, any substance at all? It did now occur to me: suppose Enoch Soames was a fool! Up cropped a rival hypothesis: suppose *I* was! I inclined to give Soames the benefit of the doubt. I had read 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune' without extracting a glimmer of meaning. Yet Mallarmé—of course—was a Master. How was I to know that Soames wasn't another? There was a sort of music in his prose, not indeed arresting, but perhaps, I thought, haunting, and laden perhaps with meanings as deep as Mallarmé's own. I awaited his poems with an open mind.

And I looked forward to them with positive impatience after I had had a second meeting with him. This was on an evening in January. Going into the aforesaid domino room, I had passed a table at which sat a pale man with an open book before him. He had looked from his book to me, and I looked back over my shoulder with a vague sense that I ought to have recognised him. I returned to pay my respects. After exchanging a few words, I said, with a glance to the open book, 'I see I am interrupting you,' and was about to pass on, but 'I prefer,' Soames replied in his toneless voice, 'to be interrupted,' and I obeyed his gesture that I should sit down.

I asked him if he often read here. 'Yes; things of this kind I read here,' he answered, indicating the title of his book—'The Poems of Shelley.'

'Anything that you really'—and I was going to say 'admire?'

But I cautiously left my sentence unfinished, and was glad that I had done so, for he said with unwonted emphasis 'Anything second-rate.'

I had read little of Shelley, but 'Of course,' I murmured, 'he's very uneven.'

'I should have thought evenness was just what was wrong with him. A deadly evenness. That's why I read him here. The noise of this place breaks the rhythm. He's tolerable here.' Soames took up the book and glanced through the pages. He laughed. Soames' laugh was a short, single and mirthless sound from the throat, unaccompanied by any movement of the face or brightening of the eyes. 'What a period!' he uttered, laying the book down. And 'What a country!' he added.

I asked rather nervously if he didn't think Keats had more or

less held his own against the drawbacks of time and place. He admitted that there were 'passages in Keats,' but did not specify them. Of 'the older men,' as he called them, he seemed to like only Milton. 'Milton,' he said, 'wasn't sentimental.' Also, 'Milton had a dark insight.' And again, 'I can always read Milton in the reading-room.'

'The reading-room?'

'Of the British Museum. I go there every day.'

'You do? I've only been there once. I'm afraid I found it rather a depressing place. It—it seemed to sap one's vitality.'

'It does. That's why I go there. The lower one's vitality, the more sensitive one is to great art. I live near the Museum. I have rooms in Dyott Street.'

'And you go round to the reading-room to read Milton?'

'Usually Milton.' He looked at me. 'It was Milton,' he certificatively added, 'who converted me to Diabolism.'

'Diabolism? Oh yes? Really?' said I, with that vague discomfort and that intense desire to be polite which one feels when a man speaks of his own religion. 'You—worship the Devil?'

Soames shook his head. 'It's not exactly worship,' he qualified, sipping his absinthe. 'It's more a matter of trusting and encouraging.'

'Ah, yes. . . . I had rather gathered from the preface to "Negations" that you were a—a Catholic.'

'*Je l'étais à cette époque.* Perhaps I still am. Yes, I'm a Catholic Diabolist.'

But this profession he made in an almost cursory tone. I could see that what was upmost in his mind was the fact that I had read 'Negations.' His pale eyes had for the first time gleamed. I felt as one who is about to be examined, *viva voce*, on the very subject in which he is shakiest. I hastily asked him how soon his poems were to be published. 'Next week,' he told me.

'And are they to be published without a title?'

'No. I found a title, at last. But I shan't tell you what it is,' as though I had been so impertinent as to inquire. 'I am not sure that it wholly satisfies me. But it is the best I can find. It suggests something of the quality of the poems. . . . Strange growths, natural and wild, yet exquisite,' he added, 'and many-hued, and full of poisons.'

I asked him what he thought of Baudelaire. He uttered the snort that was his laugh, and, 'Baudelaire,' he said, 'was a *bourgeois malgré lui*.' France had had only one poet: Villon; 'and two-

thirds of Villon were sheer journalism.' Verlaine was 'an *épiciér malgré lui*.' Altogether, rather to my surprise, he rated French literature lower than English. There were 'passages' in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. But 'I,' he summed up, 'owe nothing to France.' He nodded at me. 'You'll see,' he predicted.

I did not, when the time came, quite see that. I thought the author of 'Fungoids' did—unconsciously, of course—owe something to the young Parisian *décadents*, or to the young English ones who owed something to *them*. I still think so. The little book—bought by me in Oxford—lies before me as I write. Its pale grey buckram cover and silver lettering have not worn well. Nor have its contents. Through these, with a melancholy interest, I have again been looking. They are not much. But at the time of their publication I had a vague suspicion that they *might* be. I suppose it is my capacity for faith, not poor Soames' work, that is weaker than it once was. . . .

TO A YOUNG WOMAN.

Thou art, who hast not been!
 Pale tunes irresolute
 And tracteries of old sounds
 Blown from a rotted flute
 Mingle with noise of cymbals rouged with rust,
 Nor not strange forms and epicene
 Lie bleeding in the dust,
 Being wounded with wounds.

 For this it is
 That in thy counterpart
 Of age-long mockeries
Thou hast not been nor art!

There seemed to me a certain inconsistency as between the first and last lines of this. I tried, with bent brows, to resolve the discord. But I did not take my failure as wholly incompatible with a meaning in Soames' mind. Might it not rather indicate the depth of his meaning? As for the craftsmanship, 'rouged with rust' seemed to me a fine stroke, and 'nor not' instead of 'and' had a curious felicity. I wondered who the Young Woman was, and what she had made of it all. I sadly suspect that Soames could not have made more of it than she. Yet, even now, if one doesn't try to make any sense at all of the poem, and reads it just for the sound, there is a certain grace of cadence. Soames was an artist—in so far as he was anything, poor fellow!

It seemed to me, when first I read 'Fungoids,' that, oddly enough, the Diabolistic side of him was the best. Diabolism seemed to be a cheerful, even a wholesome, influence in his life.

NOCTURNE.

Round and round the shutter'd Square
I stroll'd with the Devil's arm in mine.
No sound but the scrape of his hoofs was there
And the ring of his laughter and mine.
We had drunk black wine.

*I scream'd 'I will race you, Master!'
'What matter,' he shriek'd, 'to-night
Which of us runs the faster?
There is nothing to fear to-night
In the foul moon's light!'*

Then I look'd him in the eyes,
And I laugh'd full shrill at the lie he told
And the gnawing fear he would fain disguise.
It was true, what I'd time and again been told:
He was old—old.

There was, I felt, quite a swing about that first stanza—a joyous and rollicking note of comradeship. The second was slightly hysterical perhaps. But I liked the third: it was so bracingly unorthodox, even according to the tenets of Soames' peculiar sect in the faith. Not much 'trusting and encouraging' here! Soames triumphantly exposing the Devil as a liar, and laughing 'full shrill,' cut a quite heartening figure, I thought—then! Now, in the light of what befell, none of his other poems depresses me so much as 'Nocturne.'

I looked out for what the metropolitan reviewers would have to say. They seemed to fall into two classes: those who had little to say and those who had nothing. The second class was the larger, and the words of the first were cold; inasmuch that

'Strikes a note of modernity throughout. . . . These tripping numbers.'—*Preston Telegraph*.

was the only lure offered in advertisements by Soames' publisher. I had hoped that when next I met the poet I could congratulate him on having made a stir; for I fancied he was not so sure of

his intrinsic greatness as he seemed. I was but able to say, rather coarsely, when next I did see him, that I hoped 'Fungoids' was 'selling splendidly.' He looked at me across his glass of absinthe and asked if I had bought a copy. His publisher had told him that three had been sold. I laughed, as at a jest.

'You don't suppose I *care*, do you?' he said, with something like a snarl. I disclaimed the notion. He added that he was not a tradesman. I said mildly that I wasn't either, and murmured that an artist who gave truly new and great things to the world had always to wait long for recognition. He said he cared not a sou for recognition. I agreed that the act of creation was its own reward.

His moroseness might have alienated me if I had regarded myself as a nobody. But ah! hadn't both John Lane and Aubrey Beardsley suggested that I should write an essay for the great new venture that was afoot—'The Yellow Book'? And hadn't Henry Harland, as editor, accepted my essay? And wasn't it to be in the very first number? At Oxford I was still *in statu pupillari*. In London I regarded myself as very much indeed a graduate now—one whom no Soames could ruffle. Partly to show off, partly in sheer good-will, I told Soames he ought to contribute to 'The Yellow Book.' He uttered from the throat a sound of scorn for that publication.

Nevertheless, I did, a day or two later, tentatively ask Harland if he knew anything of the work of a man called Enoch Soames. Harland paused in the midst of his characteristic stride around the room, threw up his hands towards the ceiling, and groaned aloud: he had often met 'that absurd creature' in Paris, and this very morning had received some poems in manuscript from him.

'Has he *no* talent?' I asked.

'He has an income. He's all right.' Harland was the most joyous of men and most generous of critics, and he hated to talk of anything about which he couldn't be enthusiastic. So I dropped the subject of Soames. The news that Soames had an income did take the edge off solicitude. I learned afterwards that he was the son of an unsuccessful and deceased bookseller in Preston, but had inherited an annuity of £300 from a married aunt, and had no surviving relatives of any kind. Materially, then, he was 'all right.' But there was still a spiritual pathos about him, sharpened for me now by the possibility that even the praises of *The Preston Telegraph* might not have been forthcoming had he not been the son of a Preston man. He had a sort of weak doggedness which I could not but admire.

Neither he nor his work received the slightest encouragement ; but he persisted in behaving as a personage : always he kept his dingy little flag flying. Wherever congregated the *jeunes féroces* of the arts, in whatever Soho restaurant they had just discovered, in whatever music-hall they were most frequenting, there was Soames in the midst of them, or rather on the fringe of them, a dim but inevitable figure. He never sought to propitiate his fellow-writers, never bated a jot of his arrogance about his own work or of his contempt for theirs. To the painters he was respectful, even humble ; but for the poets and prosaists of 'The Yellow Book,' and later of 'The Savoy,' he had never a word but of scorn. He wasn't resentful. It didn't occur to anybody that he or his Catholic Diabolism mattered. When, in the autumn of '96, he brought out (at his own expense, this time) a third book, his last book, nobody said a word for or against it. I meant, but forgot, to buy it. I never saw it, and am ashamed to say I don't even remember what it was called. But I did, at the time of its publication, say to Rothenstein that I thought poor old Soames was really a rather tragic figure, and that I believed he would literally die for want of recognition. Rothenstein scoffed. He said I was trying to get credit for a kind heart which I didn't possess ; and perhaps this was so. But at the private view of the New English Art Club, a few weeks later, I beheld a pastel portrait of 'Enoch Soames, Esq.' It was very like him, and very like Rothenstein to have done it. Soames was standing near it, in his soft hat and his waterproof cape, all through the afternoon. Anybody who knew him would have recognised the portrait at a glance, but nobody who didn't know him would have recognised the portrait from its bystander : it 'existed' so much more than he ; it was bound to. Also, it had not that expression of faint happiness which on that day was discernible, yes, in Soames' countenance. Fame had breathed on him. Twice again in the course of the month I went to the New English, and on both occasions Soames himself was on view there. Looking back, I regard the close of that exhibition as having been virtually the close of his career. He had felt the breath of Fame against his cheek—so late, for such a little while ; and at its withdrawal he gave in, gave up, gave out. He, who had never looked strong or well, looked ghastly now—a shadow of the shade he had once been. He still frequented the domino room, but, having lost all wish to excite curiosity, he no longer read books there. 'You read only at the Museum now ?' asked I, with attempted cheerfulness. He said he never went there now. 'No absinthe there,'

he muttered. It was the sort of thing that in old days he would have said for effect; but it carried conviction now. Absinthe, erst but a point in the 'personality' he had striven so hard to build up, was solace and necessity now. He no longer called it 'la sorcière glauque.' He had shed away all his French phrases. He had become a plain, unvarnished, Preston man.

Failure, if it be a plain, unvarnished, complete failure, and even though it be a squalid failure, has always a certain dignity. I avoided Soames because he made me feel rather vulgar. John Lane had published, by this time, two little books of mine, and they had had a pleasant little success of esteem. I was a—slight but definite—'personality.' Frank Harris had engaged me to kick up my heels in *The Saturday Review*, Alfred Harmsworth was letting me do likewise in *The Daily Mail*. I was just what Soames wasn't. And he shamed my gloss. Had I known that he really and firmly believed in the greatness of what he as an artist had achieved, I might not have shunned him. No man who hasn't lost his vanity can be held to have altogether failed. Soames' dignity was an illusion of mine. One day in the first week of June, 1897, that illusion went. But on the evening of that day Soames went too.

I had been out most of the morning, and, as it was too late to reach home in time for luncheon, I sought 'the Vingtième.' This little place—*Restaurant du Vingtième Siècle*, to give it its full title—had been discovered in '96 by the poets and prosaists, but had now been more or less abandoned in favour of some later find. I don't think it lived long enough to justify its name; but, at that time, there it still was, in Greek Street, a few doors from Soho Square, and almost opposite to that house where, in the first years of the century, a little girl, and with her a boy named De Quincey, made nightly encampment in darkness and hunger among dust and rats and old legal parchments. The Vingtième was but a small whitewashed room, leading out into the street at one end and into a kitchen at the other. The proprietor and cook was a Frenchman, known to us as *Monsieur Vingtième*; the waiters were his two daughters, Rose and Berthe; and the food, according to faith, was good. The tables were so narrow, and were set so close together, that there was space for twelve of them, six jutting from either wall.

Only the two nearest to the door, as I went in, were occupied. On one side sat a tall, flashy, rather Mephistophelian man whom I had seen from time to time in the domino room and elsewhere.

On the other side sat Soames. They made a queer contrast in that sunlit room—Soames sitting haggard in that hat and cape which nowhere at any season had I seen him doff, and this other, this keenly vital man, at sight of whom I more than ever wondered whether he were a diamond merchant, a conjurer, or the head of a private detective agency. I was sure Soames didn't want my company; but I asked, as it would have seemed brutal not to, whether I might join him, and took the chair opposite to his. He was smoking a cigarette, with an untasted salmi of something on his plate and a half-empty bottle of Sauterne before him; and he was quite silent. I said that the preparations for the Jubilee made London impossible. (I rather liked them really.) I professed a wish to go right away till the whole thing was over. In vain did I attune myself to his gloom. He seemed not to hear me nor even to see me. I felt that his behaviour made me ridiculous in the eyes of the other man. The gangway between the two rows of tables at the Vingtième was hardly more than two feet wide (Rose and Berthe, in their ministrations, had always to edge past each other, quarrelling in whispers as they did so), and any one at the table abreast of yours was practically at yours. I thought our neighbour was amused at my failure to interest Soames, and so, as I could not explain to him that my insistence was merely charitable, I became silent. Without turning my head, I had him well within my range of vision. I hoped I looked less vulgar than he in contrast with Soames. I was sure he was not an Englishman, but what *was* his nationality? Though his jet-black hair was *en brosse*, I did not think he was French. To Berthe, who waited on him, he spoke French fluently, but with a hardly native idiom and accent. I gathered that this was his first visit to the Vingtième; but Berthe was off-hand in her manner to him; he had not made a good impression. His eyes were handsome, but—like the Vingtième's tables—too narrow and set too close together. His nose was predatory, and the points of his moustache, waxed up beyond his nostrils, gave a fixity to his smile. Decidedly, he was sinister. And my sense of discomfort in his presence was intensified by the scarlet waistcoat which tightly, and so unseasonably in June, sheathed his ample chest. This waistcoat wasn't wrong merely because of the heat, either. It was somehow all wrong in itself. It wouldn't have done on Christmas morning. It would have struck a jarring note at the first night of 'Hernani.' I was trying to account for its wrongness when Soames suddenly and strangely broke silence. 'A hundred years hence!' he murmured, as in a trance.

'We shall not be here!' I briskly but fatuously added.

'We shall not be here. No,' he droned, 'but the Museum will still be just where it is. And the reading-room, just where it is. And people will be able to go and read there.' He inhaled sharply, and a spasm as of actual pain contorted his features.

I wondered what train of thought poor Soames had been following. He did not enlighten me when he said, after a long pause, 'You think I haven't minded.'

'Minded what, Soames?'

'Neglect. Failure.'

'Failure?' I said heartily. 'Failure?' I repeated vaguely. 'Neglect—yes, perhaps; but that's quite another matter. Of course you haven't been—appreciated. But what then? Any artist who—who gives—' What I wanted to say was, 'Any artist who gives truly new and great things to the world has always to wait long for recognition'; but the flattery would not out: in the face of his misery, a misery so genuine and so unmasked, my lips would not say the words.

And then—he said them for me. I flushed. 'That's what you were going to say, isn't it?' he asked.

'How did you know?'

'It's what you said to me three years ago, when "*Fungoids*" was published.' I flushed the more. I need not have done so at all. 'It's the only important thing I ever heard you say,' he continued. 'And I've never forgotten it. It's a true thing. It's a horrible truth. But—d'you remember what I answered? I said "I don't care a sou for recognition." And you believed me. You've gone on believing I'm above that sort of thing. You're shallow. What should *you* know of the feelings of a man like me? You imagine that a great artist's faith in himself and in the verdict of posterity is enough to keep him happy. . . . You've never guessed at the bitterness and loneliness, the'—his voice broke; but presently he resumed, speaking with a force that I had never known in him. 'Posterity! What use is it to *me*? A dead man doesn't know that people are visiting his grave—visiting his birthplace—putting up tablets to him—unveiling statues of him. A dead man can't read the books that are written about him. A hundred years hence! Think of it! If I could come back to life *then*—just for a few hours—and go to the reading-room, and *read*! Or better still: if I could be projected, now, at this moment, into that future, into that reading-room, just for this one afternoon! I'd sell myself body and soul to the devil, for that! Think of the pages and pages in

the catalogue: "Soames, Enoch" endlessly—endless editions, commentaries, prolegomena, biographies—but here he was interrupted by a sudden loud creak of the chair at the next table. Our neighbour had half risen from his place. He was leaning towards us, apologetically intrusive.

'Excuse—permit me,' he said softly. 'I have been unable not to hear. Might I take a liberty? In this little restaurant-sans-*façon*'—he spread wide his hands—'might I, as the phrase is, "cut in"?'

I could but signify our acquiescence. Berthe had appeared at the kitchen door, thinking the stranger wanted his bill. He waved her away with his cigar, and in another moment had seated himself beside me, commanding a full view of Soames.

'Though not an Englishman,' he explained, 'I know my London well, Mr. Soames. Your name and fame—Mr. Beerbohm's too—very known to me. Your point is: who am I?' He glanced quickly over his shoulder, and in a lowered voice said 'I am the Devil.'

I couldn't help it: I laughed. I tried not to, I knew there was nothing to laugh at, my rudeness shamed me, but—I laughed with increasing volume. The Devil's quiet dignity, the surprise and disgust of his raised eyebrows, did but the more dissolve me. I rocked to and fro, I lay back aching. I behaved deplorably.

'I am a gentleman, and,' he said with intense emphasis, 'I thought I was in the company of *gentlemen*.'

'Don't!' I gasped faintly. 'Oh, don't!'

'Curious, *nicht wahr*?' I heard him say to Soames. 'There is a type of person to whom the very mention of my name is—oh-so-awfully-funny! In your theatres the dullest *comédien* needs only to say "The Devil!" and right away they give him "the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind." Is it not so?'

I had now just breath enough to offer my apologies. He accepted them, but coldly, and re-addressed himself to Soames.

'I am a man of business,' he said, 'and always I would put things through "right now," as they say in the States. You are a poet. *Les affaires*—you detest them. So be it. But with me you will deal, eh? What you have said just now gives me furiously to hope.'

Soames had not moved, except to light a fresh cigarette. He sat crouched forward, with his elbows squared on the table, and

his head just above the level of his hands, staring up at the Devil. 'Go on,' he nodded. I had no remnant of laughter in me now.

'It will be the more pleasant, our little deal,' the Devil went on, 'because you are—I mistake not?—a Diabolist.'

'A Catholic Diabolist,' said Soames.

The Devil accepted the reservation genially. 'You wish,' he resumed, 'to visit now—this afternoon as-ever-is—the reading-room of the British Museum, yes? but of a hundred years hence, yes? *Parfaitement*. Time—an illusion. Past and future—they are as ever-present as the present, or at any rate only what you call "just-round-the-corner." I switch you on to any date. I project you—pouf! You wish to be in the reading-room just as it will be on the afternoon of June 3, 1997? You wish to find yourself standing in that room, just past the swing-doors, this very minute, yes? and to stay there till closing time? Am I right?'

Soames nodded.

The Devil looked at his watch. 'Ten past two,' he said. 'Closing time in summer same then as now: seven o'clock. That will give you almost five hours. At seven o'clock—pouf!—you find yourself again here, sitting at this table. I am dining to-night *dans le monde—dans le highif*. That concludes my present visit to your great city. I come and fetch you here, Mr. Soames, on my way home.'

'Home?' I echoed.

'Be it never so humble!' said the Devil lightly.

'All right,' said Soames.

'Soames!' I entreated. But my friend moved not a muscle.

The Devil had made as though to stretch forth his hand across the table, but he paused in his gesture.

'A hundred years hence, as now,' he smiled, 'no smoking allowed in the reading-room. You would better therefore——'

Soames removed the cigarette from his mouth and dropped it into his glass of Sauterne.

'Soames!' again I cried. 'Can't you'—but the Devil had now stretched forth his hand across the table. He brought it slowly down on—the table-cloth. Soames' chair was empty. His cigarette floated sodden in his wine-glass. There was no other trace of him.

For a few moments the Devil let his hand rest where it lay, gazing at me out of the corners of his eyes, vulgarly triumphant.

A shudder shook me. With an effort I controlled myself and rose from my chair. 'Very clever,' I said condescendingly.

'But—"The Time Machine" is a delightful book, don't you think? So entirely original!'

'You are pleased to sneer,' said the Devil, who had also risen, 'but it is one thing to write about an impossible machine; it is a quite other thing to be a Supernatural Power.' All the same, I had scored.

Berthe had come forth at the sound of our rising. I explained to her that Mr. Soames had been called away, and that both he and I would be dining here. It was not until I was out in the open air that I began to feel giddy. I have but the haziest recollection of what I did, where I wandered, in the glaring sunshine of that endless afternoon. I remember the sound of carpenters' hammers all along Piccadilly, and the bare chaotic look of the half-erected 'stands.' Was it in the Green Park, or in Kensington Gardens, or *where* was it that I sat on a chair beneath a tree, trying to read an evening paper? There was a phrase in the leading article that went on repeating itself in my fagged mind—'Little is hidden from this august Lady full of the garnered wisdom of sixty years of Sovereignty.' I remember wildly conceiving a letter (to reach Windsor by express messenger told to await an answer):

'MADAM,—Well knowing that your Majesty is full of the garnered wisdom of sixty years of Sovereignty, I venture to ask your advice in the following delicate matter. Mr. Enoch Soames, whose poems you may or may not know' . . .

Was there *no* way of helping him—saving him? A bargain was a bargain, and I was the last man to aid or abet anyone in wriggling out of a reasonable obligation. I wouldn't have lifted a little finger to save Faust. But poor Soames!—doomed to pay without respite an eternal price for nothing but a fruitless search and a bitter disillusioning. . . .

Odd and uncanny it seemed to me that he, Soames, in the flesh, in the waterproof cape, was at this moment living in the last decade of the next century, poring over books not yet written, and seeing and seen by men not yet born. Uncannier and odder still, that to-night and evermore he would be in Hell. Assuredly, truth was stranger than fiction.

Endless that afternoon was. Almost I wished I had gone with Soames—not indeed to stay in the reading-room, but to sally forth for a brisk sight-seeing walk around a new London. I wandered restlessly out of the Park I had sat in. Vainly I tried

to imagine myself an ardent tourist from the eighteenth century. Intolerable was the strain of the slow-passing and empty minutes. Long before seven o'clock I was back at the Vingtième.

I sat there just where I had sat for luncheon. Air came in listlessly through the open door behind me. Now and again Rose or Berthe appeared for a moment. I had told them I would not order any dinner till Mr. Soames came. A hurdy-gurdy began to play, abruptly drowning the noise of a quarrel between some Frenchmen further up the street. Whenever the tune was changed I heard the quarrel still raging. I had bought another evening paper on my way. I unfolded it. My eyes gazed ever away from it to the clock over the kitchen door. . . .

Five minutes, now, to the hour! I remembered that clocks in restaurants are kept five minutes fast. I concentrated my eyes on the paper. I vowed I would not look away from it again. I held it upright, at its full width, close to my face, so that I had no view of anything but it. . . . Rather a tremulous sheet? Only because of the draught, I told myself. . . .

My arms gradually became stiff; they ached; but I could not drop them—now. I had a suspicion, I had a certainty. Well, what then? . . . What else had I come for? Yet I held tight that barrier of newspaper. Only the sound of Berthe's brisk footstep from the kitchen enabled me, forced me, to drop it, and to utter:

'What shall we have to eat, Soames?'

'*Il est souffrant, ce pauvre Monsieur Soames?*' asked Berthe.

'He's only—tired.' I asked her to get some wine—Burgundy—and whatever food might be ready. Soames sat crouched forward against the table, exactly as when last I had seen him. It was as though he had never moved—he who had moved so unimaginably far. Once or twice in the afternoon it had for an instant occurred to me that perhaps his journey was not to be fruitless—that perhaps we had all been wrong in our estimate of the works of Enoch Soames. That we had been horribly right was horribly clear from the look of him. But 'Don't be discouraged,' I falteringly said. 'Perhaps it's only that you—didn't leave enough time. Two, three centuries hence, perhaps—'

'Yes,' his voice came. 'I've thought of that.'

'And now—now for the more immediate future! Where are you going to hide? How would it be if you caught the Paris express from Charing Cross? Almost an hour to spare. Don't go on to Paris. Stop at Calais. Live in Calais. He'd never think of looking for you in Calais.'

'It's like my luck,' he said, 'to spend my last hours on earth with an ass.' But I was not offended. 'And a treacherous ass,' he strangely added, tossing across to me a crumpled bit of paper which he had been holding in his hand. I glanced at the writing on it—some sort of gibberish, apparently. I laid it impatiently aside.

'Come, Soames! pull yourself together! This isn't a mere matter of life and death. It's a question of eternal torment, mind you! You don't mean to say you're going to wait limply here till the Devil comes to fetch you?'

'I can't do anything else. I've no choice.'

'Come! This is "trusting and encouraging" with a vengeance! This is Diabolism run mad!' I filled his glass with wine. 'Surely, now that you've *seen* the brute——'

'It's no good abusing him.'

'You must admit there's nothing Miltonic about him, Soames.'

'I don't say he's not rather different from what I expected.'

'He's a vulgarian, he's a swell-mobsman, he's the sort of man who hangs about the corridors of trains going to the Riviera and steals ladies' jewel-cases. Imagine eternal torment presided over by *him*!'

'You don't suppose I look forward to it, do you?'

'Then why not slip quietly out of the way?'

Again and again I filled his glass, and always, mechanically, he emptied it; but the wine kindled no spark of enterprise in him. He did not eat, and I myself ate hardly at all. I did not in my heart believe that any dash for freedom could save him. The chase would be swift, the capture certain. But better anything than this passive, meek, miserable waiting. I told Soames that for the honour of the human race he ought to make some show of resistance. He asked what the human race had ever done for him. 'Besides,' he said, 'can't you understand that I'm in his power? You saw him touch me, didn't you? There's an end of it. I've no will. I'm sealed.'

I made a gesture of despair. He went on repeating the word 'sealed.' I began to realise that the wine had clouded his brain. No wonder! Foodless he had gone into futurity, foodless he still was. I urged him to eat at any rate some bread. It was maddening to think that he, who had so much to tell, might tell nothing. 'How was it all,' I asked, 'yonder? Come! Tell me your adventures.'

'They'd make first-rate "copy," wouldn't they?'

'I'm awfully sorry for you, Soames, and I make all possible

allowances; but what earthly right have you to insinuate that I should make "copy," as you call it, out of you?

The poor fellow pressed his hands to his forehead. 'I don't know,' he said. 'I had some reason, I know. . . . I'll try to remember.'

'That's right. Try to remember everything. Eat a little more bread. What did the reading-room look like?'

'Much as usual,' he at length muttered.

'Many people there?'

'Usual sort of number.'

'What did they look like?'

Soames tried to visualise them. 'They all,' he presently remembered, 'looked very like one another.'

My mind took a fearsome leap. 'All dressed in Jaeger?'

'Yes. I think so. Greyish-yellowish stuff.'

'A sort of uniform?' He nodded. 'With a number on it, perhaps?—a number on a large disc of metal strapped round the left arm? D.K.F. 78,910—that sort of thing?' It was even so. 'And all of them—men and women alike—looking very well-cared-for? very Utopian? and smelling rather strongly of carbolic? and all of them quite hairless?' I was right every time. Soames was only not sure whether the men and women were hairless or shorn. 'I hadn't time to look at them very closely,' he explained.

'No, of course not. But ——'

'They stared at me, I can tell you. I attracted a great deal of attention.' At last he had done that! 'I think I rather scared them. They moved away whenever I came near. They followed me about, at a distance, wherever I went. The men at the round desk in the middle seemed to have a sort of panic whenever I went to make inquiries.'

'What did you do when you arrived?'

Well, he had gone straight to the catalogue, of course—to the S volumes, and had stood long before SN-SOF, unable to take this volume out of the shelf, because his heart was beating so. . . . At first, he said, he wasn't disappointed—he only thought there was some new arrangement. He went to the middle desk and asked where the catalogue of *twentieth-century* books was kept. He gathered that there was still only one catalogue. Again he looked up his name, stared at the three little pasted slips he had known so well. Then he went and sat down for a long time. . . .

'And then,' he droned, 'I looked up the "Dictionary of National

Biography" and some encyclopædias. . . . I went back to the middle desk and asked what was the best modern book on late nineteenth-century literature. They told me Mr. T. K. Nupton's book was considered the best. I looked it up in the catalogue and filled in a form for it. It was brought to me. My name wasn't in the index, but— Yes!' he said with a sudden change of tone. 'That's what I'd forgotten. Where's that bit of paper? Give it me back.'

I, too, had forgotten that cryptic screed. I found it fallen on the floor, and handed it to him.

He smoothed it out, nodding and smiling at me disagreeably. 'I found myself glancing through Nupton's book,' he resumed. 'Not very easy reading. Some sort of phonetic spelling. . . . All the modern books I saw were phonetic.'

'Then I don't want to hear any more, Soames, please.'

'The proper names seemed all to be spelt in the old way. But for that, I mightn't have noticed my own name.'

'Your own name? Really? Soames, I'm very glad.'

'And yours.'

'No!'

'I thought I should find you waiting here to-night. So I took the trouble to copy out the passage. Read it.'

I snatched the paper. Soames' handwriting was characteristically dim. It, and the noisome spelling, and my excitement, made me all the slower to grasp what T. K. Nupton was driving at.

The document lies before me at this moment. Strange that the words I here copy out for you were copied out for me by poor Soames just eighty-one years hence. . . .

From p. 234 of 'Inglish Littracher 1890-1900' bi T. K. Nupton, published bi th Stait, 1992:

'Fr egzarmpl, a riter ov th time, naimd Max Beerbohm, hoo woz stil alive in th twentieth senchri, rote a stauri in wich e pautraid an immajinari karrakter kauld "Enoch Soames"—a thurd-raith poit hoo beleevz inself a grate jeneus an maix a bargain with th Devvl in auder ter no wot posterriti thinx ov im! It iz a sumwot labud sattire but not without vallu az showing hou seriusli the yung men ov th aiteen-ninetiz took themselvz. Nou that the littreri profesn haz bin auganized az a departmnt of publik servis, our riters hav found their levvl an hav lernt ter doo their duti without thort ov th morro. "Th laibrer iz werthi ov hiz hire,"

an that iz aul. Thank hevvn we hav no Enoch Soameses among us to-dai !'

I found that by murmuring the words aloud (a device which I commend to my reader) I was able to master them, little by little. The clearer they became, the greater was my bewilderment, my distress and horror. The whole thing was a nightmare. Afar, the great grisly background of what was in store for the poor dear art of letters ; here, at the table, fixing on me a gaze that made me hot all over, the poor fellow whom—whom evidently . . . but no : whatever down-grade my character might take in coming years, I should never be such a brute as to—

Again I examined the screed. 'Immajnari'—but here Soames was, no more imaginary, alas ! than I. And 'labud'—what on earth was that ? (To this day, I have never made out that word.) 'It's all very—baffling,' I at length stammered.

Soames said nothing, but cruelly did not cease to look at me.

'Are you sure,' I temporised, 'quite sure you copied the thing out correctly ?'

'Quite.'

'Well, then it's this wretched Nupton who must have made—must be going to make—some idiotic mistake. . . . Look here, Soames ! you know me better than to suppose that I . . . After all, the name "Max Beerbohm" is not at all an uncommon one, and there must be several Enoch Soameses running around—or rather, "Enoch Soames" is a name that might occur to anyone writing a story. And I don't write stories : I'm an essayist, an observer, a recorder. . . . I admit that it's an extraordinary coincidence. But you must see —'

'I see the whole thing,' said Soames quietly. And he added, with a touch of his old manner, but with more dignity than I had ever known in him, '*Parlons d'autre chose.*'

I accepted that suggestion very promptly. I returned straight to the more immediate future. I spent most of the long evening in renewed appeals to Soames to slip away and seek refuge somewhere. I remember saying at last that if indeed I was destined to write about him, the supposed 'stauri' had better have at least a happy ending. Soames repeated those last three words in a tone of intense scorn. 'In Life and in Art,' he said, 'all that matters is an *inevitable* ending.'

'But,' I urged, more hopefully than I felt, 'an ending that can be avoided *isn't* inevitable.'

'You aren't an artist,' he rasped. 'And you're so hopelessly not an artist that, so far from being able to imagine a thing and make it seem true, you're going to make even a true thing seem as if you'd made it up. You're a miserable bungler. And it's like my luck.'

I protested that the miserable bungler was not I—was not going to be I—but T. K. Nupton; and we had a rather heated argument, in the thick of which it suddenly seemed to me that Soames saw he was in the wrong: he had quite physically cowered. But I wondered why—and now I guessed with a cold throb just why—he stared so, past me. The bringer of that 'inevitable ending' filled the doorway.

I managed to turn in my chair and to say, not without a semblance of lightness, 'Aha, come in!' Dread was indeed rather blunted in me by his looking so absurdly like a villain in a melodrama. The sheen of his tilted hat and of his shirt front, the repeated twists he was giving to his moustache, and most of all the magnificence of his sneer, gave token that he was there only to be foiled.

He was at our table in a stride. 'I am sorry,' he sneered witheringly, 'to break up your pleasant party, but——'

'You don't: you complete it,' I assured him. 'Mr. Soames and I want to have a little talk with you. Won't you sit? Mr. Soames got nothing—frankly nothing—by his journey this afternoon. We don't wish to say that the whole thing was a swindle—a common swindle. On the contrary, we believe you meant well. But of course the bargain, such as it was, is off.'

The Devil gave no verbal answer. He merely looked at Soames and pointed with rigid forefinger to the door. Soames was wretchedly rising from his chair when, with a desperate quick gesture, I swept together two dinner-knives that were on the table, and laid their blades across each other. The Devil stepped sharp back against the table behind him, averting his face and shuddering.

'You are not superstitious!' he hissed.

'Not at all,' I smiled.

'Soames!' he said as to an underling, but without turning his face, 'put those knives straight!'

With an inhibitive gesture to my friend, 'Mr. Soames,' I said emphatically to the Devil, 'is a *Catholic* Diabolist'; but my poor friend did the Devil's bidding, not mine; and now, with his master's eyes again fixed on him, he arose, he shuffled past me. I tried

to speak. It was he that spoke. 'Try,' was the prayer he threw back at me as the Devil pushed him roughly out through the door, 'try to make them know that I did exist !'

In another instant I too was through that door. I stood staring all ways—up the street, across it, down it. There was moonlight and lamplight, but there was not Soames nor that other.

Dazed, I stood there. Dazed, I turned back, at length, into the little room ; and I suppose I paid Berthe or Rose for my dinner and luncheon, and for Soames' : I hope so, for I never went to the Vingtième again. Ever since that night I have avoided Greek Street altogether. And for years I did not set foot even in Soho Square, because on that same night it was there that I paced and loitered, long and long, with some such dull sense of hope as a man has in not straying far from the place where he has lost something. . . . 'Round and round the shutter'd Square'—that line came back to me on my lonely beat, and with it the whole stanza, ringing in my brain and bearing in on me how tragically different from the happy scene imagined by him was the poet's actual experience of that prince in whom of all princes we should put not our trust.

But—strange how the mind of an essayist, be it never so stricken, roves and ranges !—I remember pausing before a wide doorstep and wondering if perchance it was on this very one that the young De Quincey lay ill and faint while poor Ann flew as fast as her feet would carry her to Oxford Street, the 'stony-hearted stepmother' of them both, and came back bearing that 'glass of port wine and spices' but for which he might, so he thought, actually have died. Was this the very doorstep that the old De Quincey used to revisit in homage ? I pondered Ann's fate, the cause of her sudden vanishing from the ken of her boy-friend ; and presently I blamed myself for letting the past override the present. Poor vanished Soames !

And for myself, too, I began to be troubled. What had I better do ? Would there be a hue and cry—Mysterious Disappearance of an Author, and all that ? He had last been seen lunching and dining in my company. Hadn't I better get a hansom and drive straight to Scotland Yard ? . . . They would think I was a lunatic. After all, I reassured myself, London was a very large place, and one very dim figure might easily drop out of it unobserved—now especially, in the blinding glare of the near Jubilee. Better say nothing at all, I thought.

And I was right. Soames' disappearance made no stir at all. He was utterly forgotten before anyone, so far as I am aware, noticed that he was no longer hanging around. Now and again some poet or prosaist may have said to another, 'What has become of that man Soames?' but I never heard any such question asked. As for his landlady in Dyott Street, no doubt he had paid her weekly, and what possessions he may have had in his rooms were enough to save her from fretting. The solicitor through whom he was paid his annuity may be presumed to have made inquiries, but no echo of these resounded. There was something rather ghastly to me in the general unconsciousness that Soames had existed, and more than once I caught myself wondering whether Nupton, that babe unborn, were going to be right in thinking him a figment of my brain.

In that extract from Nupton's repulsive book there is one point which perhaps puzzles you. How is it that the author, though I have here mentioned him by name and have quoted the exact words he is going to write, is not going to grasp the obvious corollary that I have invented nothing? The answer can be only this: Nupton will not have read the later passages of this memoir. Such lack of thoroughness is a serious fault in anyone who undertakes to do scholar's work. And I hope these words will meet the eye of some contemporary rival to Nupton and be the undoing of Nupton.

I like to think that some time between 1992 and 1997 somebody will have looked up this memoir, and will have forced on the world his inevitable and startling conclusions. And I have reasons for believing that this will be so. You realise that the reading-room into which Soames was projected by the Devil was in all respects precisely as it will be on the afternoon of June 3, 1997. You realise, therefore, that on that afternoon, when it comes round, there the self-same crowd will be, and there Soames will be, punctually, he and they doing precisely what they did before. Recall now Soames' account of the sensation he made. You may say that the mere difference of his costume was enough to make him sensational in that uniformed crowd. You wouldn't say so if you had ever seen him. I assure you that in no period would Soames be anything but dim. The fact that people are going to stare at him, and follow him around, and seem afraid of him, can be explained only on the hypothesis that they will somehow have been prepared for his ghostly visitation. They will have been awfully waiting to see whether he really would come. And when he does come the effect will of course be—awful.

An authentic, guaranteed, proven ghost, but—only a ghost, alas ! Only that. In his first visit, Soames was a creature of flesh and blood, whereas the creatures into whose midst he was projected were but ghosts, I take it—solid, palpable, vocal, but unconscious and automatic ghosts, in a building that was itself an illusion. Next time, that building and those creatures will be real. It is of Soames that there will be but the semblance. I wish I could think him destined to revisit the world actually, physically, consciously. I wish he had this one brief escape, this one small treat, to look forward to. I never forget him for long. He is where he is, and forever. The more rigid moralists among you may say he has only himself to blame. For my part, I think he has been very hardly used. It is well that vanity should be chastened ; and Enoch Soames' vanity was, I admit, above the average, and called for special treatment. But there was no need for vindictiveness. You say he contracted to pay the price he is paying ; yes ; but I maintain that he was induced to do so by fraud. Well-informed in all things, the Devil must have known that my friend would gain nothing by his visit to futurity. The whole thing was a very shabby trick. The more I think of it, the more detestable the Devil seems to me.

Of him I have caught sight several times, here and there, since that day at the Vingtième. Only once, however, have I seen him at close quarters. This was a couple of years ago, in Paris. I was walking, one afternoon, along the Rue d'Antin, when I saw him advancing from the opposite direction—over-dressed as ever, and swinging an ebony cane, and altogether behaving as though the whole pavement belonged to him. At thought of Enoch Soames and the myriads of other sufferers eternally in this brute's dominion, a great cold wrath filled me, and I drew myself up to my full height. But—well, one is so used to nodding and smiling in the street to anybody whom one knows that the action becomes almost independent of oneself : to prevent it requires a very sharp effort and great presence of mind. I was miserably aware, as I passed the Devil, that I nodded and smiled to him. And my shame was the deeper and hotter because he, if you please, stared straight at me with the utmost haughtiness.

To be cut—deliberately cut—by *him* ! I was, I still am, furious at having had that happen to me.

THE CROSSING OF THE DANUBE.

(Being pages from the Journal of Lieutenant E. H. Young, R.N.V.R., M.P., serving on the staff of Rear-Admiral Troubridge, C.B., commanding the British Naval Mission with the Royal Serbian Army. They relate to the experiences of a small detachment of the Mission that was at Semendria when the German centre forced the passage of the Danube there.)

SEMENDRIA.

'It is the harvest at Semendria, you will enjoy it there,' said a Serbian officer to me, as I left Belgrade for that place on Tuesday (October 5, 1914). I travelled with B. (Lt. R.M.), who was in charge of a reinforcement of men and materials that the Admiral was sending down there. Twelve hours' rough travelling in a truck brought us to Vranovo, the rail head, ten kilometres short of Semendria.

For the forty miles from Belgrade to Semendria the Danube is banked on the Serbian side with hills. On the other side is the limitless flat plain of the Bannate. At Semendria the hills upon the Serbian side stop, and there comes a plain. The town is set beside, almost beneath, the massive and lofty walls of the Grad, a circle of fourteenth-century fortifications, studded with high towers and enclosing some dozen flat acres. One side of the Grad is an actual river-wall, lapped by the Danube: the great gate in the other is close to the market-place. Here, in an exposed shed, was our arsenal of explosives.

Semendria is a town of grapes. The warm hillside above the river is one bank of vineyards. About a mile and a half above the town we had some apparatus in the river, moored under the willows. Our party lived in a tiny white cottage on a terrace on the vine-grown hillside. The only way out to the cottage, called the Vinograd, was by a main road that ran along the edge of the river at the bottom of the bank, as it might be the road below Taplow wood. The Vinograd cottage lay half-way up the bank. You could get to it from the road below under cover of a shallow glen studded with fruit trees.

A QUIET DAY.

When we arrived at Semendria we walked straight out to the Vinograd along the river road. A long flat island divides the river into two. The Austrians had held it ever since they crossed here, and were swiftly turned out a year ago. The snipers on the island were always troublesome. From the river road to the island was five hundred yards across. The whole river's width was one thousand yards. Screens of boughs had been erected at all the exposed parts of the road, because of the sniping. But that day, as we went out to the Vinograd, not a shot was fired.

We spent the greater part of the day on the grass terrace outside the cottage, eating bully beef, grapes and bread, and drinking large flagons of the fine Semendria wine. Our party consisted of a warrant officer and four naval ratings. Besides, there were an interpreter (a Serbian soldier) and a commissary (a reserve Serbian soldier), a cheery soul, of unfailing courage and vivacity—V. was his name. At sunset B. and I went back to the town to spend the night at the inn, as there was no room at the Vinograd. As we came from the shallow glen that leads down from the Vinograd to the road, I saw that at the end of it was a spring, and that to take the road over the waters of the spring, as they ran into the river, a rough timber bridge or culvert, about seven feet wide by five feet high, had been built. The far end of the culvert was masked from the other side of the river by a growth of willows. Near by, on each side of the culvert, between the river's edge and the road, were Serbian trenches, mere screens of mud and boughs. That culvert deserved well of us.

THE BOMBARDMENT. (FIRST DAY.)

We had a night full of the horrors of peace at the inn at Semendria. After breakfast we walked in the town. The main street was busy with a fair. There were lines of bullock-carts, laden with grapes, brilliant red and green paprikas, yellow and green gourds as big as footballs, and droves of pigs. The peasant women, in their bright clothes, were all chattering and chaffing. We were at the corner of the church and turning across a little public square to a high block of buildings, the Military Station, intending to telephone to the Admiral of our arrival.

'Were the Germans to act up to their reputation,' I was actually

saying to B., 'they would bombard the town first if they intended to cross here——'

I did not finish the sentence. It was cut short by the ear-piercing shriek which a 9-inch shell makes as it comes straight towards you. The shriek rushed into a low house across the street; there was a detonation; and the house exploded and collapsed with a clatter of flying stones.

At once there was a cry from all the people in the street and a frantic flight. Bullock-waggons, pigs, and people were moving fast up the road in a pell-mell scurry, fleeing inland all and away from the river. We went into the military station. As we passed the square, two more shells fell on the far side of the church, and we could hear two more houses come clattering down. As we got into the telephone room in the great building another monster came over the roof and fell in the square, just outside. Every window was blown in, the plaster fell in heaps on our heads, the square was obscured as in a London fog by dust and fumes. The telephone had failed; a girl and an old man in charge of it were laughing over the event as at a good joke. His bald head was cut by the flying glass. A moment later a shell fell on the corner of the building, shaving it off and exploding on the pavement. We went out into the portico; a shell fell immediately in front of it, blowing us back. A group of terrified women and children ran in. We advised them to go to the Grad, where, as far as we could hear, no shells were falling, and set out ourselves across the square on the way back to the Vinograd. As we went, I saw four enormous holes in the cobbled street, ten feet by six feet I suppose, where the things had fallen. The air was still obscured by fumes and dust. By luck we had chosen a pause; no more shells fell as we left the town. We returned to the Vinograd by the river road. Field guns were firing slowly from the island as we passed, but at the hill above. A few minutes after we reached the cottage the general bombardment began, of which the firing at the town was the herald.

It is baffling to be in the middle of heavy fire from big guns. You feel shy. One idea is very strong, that it is not the least use running away. Where to run to?

As we stood together in the cottage on the bank above the river we heard the explosions of the big shells drawing nearer along the hillside. Their advance passed us and proceeded up the river till the whole of the hillside from the town onwards for

a mile and a half was under heavy fire. I thought that they were choosing the houses as targets, so I recommended moving off to the shallow glen. We took some bully beef and bread, and the whole party withdrew thither. There was a shallow hole in the side of the glen in which we sat. I had on a heavy trench coat, most luckily, as it was raining, and riding boots. I was not to have them off for five days and nights.

There were at least a hundred guns on the other side of the river, a tremendous collection of the biggest artillery. There were at least two four-gun batteries of 12-inch howitzers. The Serbs spoke of these as 17-inch. I am not sure which they were. We called them the 9.15's, because the noise the monsters made coming over was just that of an express train on the line. They were mostly busy bombarding supposed Serbian gun positions on the top of the hill just above us. The burst of their projectiles made a triple noise, 'rumph-rumph-rumph,' from each shell—'knocking at the door.' The bulk of the guns were 9-inch howitzers—'Whispering-Willies.' They were firing anywhere and everywhere. Their shells burst with a shattering, sharp detonation. There was a number beyond counting of smaller guns, about 4-inch I should think, throwing high explosive shells. There were four or five revolver guns throwing four big high explosive shells in a volley. Immediately opposite us, in the woods, and along the island also, were groups of field batteries throwing shrapnel of four different calibres, from big 4-inch shells down to the spitting, cracking, little projectiles of the mountain batteries.

The din steadily increased. It never ceased, except for a short lull, for two days and nights. During a deceptive pause at midday we went up and got some bread and beef in the cottage. As we ate it, shrapnel began to burst round the house, and we cut and ran back to the glen. The howitzers began to play amongst the vineyards just above, destroying the cottages there. A group of weeping women and children fled into the glen: one had had a child killed in a falling cottage a moment before. We established them in a so-called shelter-trench by a hedge, which was no shelter, but where they were at least concealed. (They crept away up the river road at nightfall.) Indeed, no shelter was of any use from such fire: all that could be done was to conceal oneself from the opposite bank. For that, we withdrew under the culvert. We arranged some planks on trestles to sit on, and others to put our feet on, and keep them out of the water. All that we could do was

to stand by our apparatus in the river, and wait. We agreed it would be better to separate the party and not put all our eggs in one basket. L. and I crossed the road and crept a quarter of a mile up the shelter-trench by the river-edge. We spent the afternoon there with the Serbian soldiers. The big high explosive shells were bursting a few hundred yards up the hill, and the langridge often buzzed over us with a hum and hit the water with a smack. When we heard it coming we lay down under the inshore bank of the trench, which was only eighteen inches high. Some of the Serbians held bits of boiler-plate behind them. They were cheery, indifferent fellows, and laughed and slept. At dusk we returned to the culvert. Just then they began to sweep that bit of the road with small shrapnel; it burst overhead and whizzed up the glen. I believe they were ranging on a tall poplar just behind us. Some bullets pattered on the top of the culvert, but it was of 3-inch wood and good enough to stop small stuff. After dusk there was a two hours' lull in our neighbourhood. We stole up to the cottage for food. A small shell had come into the sleeping-room and the bedding was smouldering. Looking out at the back we could hear all the large guns playing a perfect fountain of shells on to the town. Shrapnel was fired at the house again. In spite of our care, I expect that we must have shown a light. We cleared out, and I went and stretched myself on a bench in the glen for an hour for a rest. Then the bombardment began all round again in full fury. We reassembled under the culvert and watched out the night there. The Serbian soldiers stole across from the trenches for a drink at the spring. Now and then an Austrian searchlight crept along and made all as bright as day. Luckily, as I said, our culvert was hidden from the opposite bank by the willow screen.

A great longing all the afternoon had been for the dark. I watched the light with great impatience at the slowness of its passing. Towards afternoon I became aware that the bombardment was beginning to get on my nerves, because of the intense relief when there came a pause of silence, and the irritation and disappointment when the shrieking of the shells began again.

THE BOMBARDMENT. (SECOND DAY.)

We greeted dawn from our hole, cold and stiff, but quite cheerful and disposed to think that if we had got through so far there was no reason why we should not get farther. At midnight we

had heard a distant sound of rifle fire, away down the river, and guessed it was an attempted crossing. (1000 Germans had crossed near Posharevatz, about six miles below the town, and had all been killed or taken by the Serbs.)

After a blessed lull before dawn, the bombardment began again at daylight. There was now much more shrapnel fire all round the culvert. Major S., who commanded the local forces, including our party, sent us a letter by an orderly to say 'Be careful. I expect a crossing from the island to-night.' In council under the culvert, we agreed that our duty was to stand by our apparatus to the latest moment which would enable us to get the party off, and then bolt. Rifle fire would give us warning of a crossing; meanwhile we had some stuff ready to use down at the Grad, and we decided to go down and try to bring it up to use if the Germans began to build a pontoon bridge. A comparative lull about noon gave us a chance. B., I, and G., our petty officer, started along the river road. We crept along behind the hedges of willows and the screens of boughs. But the screens were already much shattered by shrapnel. We passed a few lines of Serbians lying hidden in shallow scoops under the hedges. They muttered caution. We could hear the Austrians talking on the island and the noise of a plank dropped. We were in foreign uniform, and B. had his marine's cap with a red band. They must have noticed us, and been watching us along the road. We came to an exposed part of the road, where it ran out a little and then in round a valley in the hillside. 'Whizz crack,' a field gun went off, and the shell burst above our heads: noise of gun and shell-burst at that range (500 yards) almost indistinguishable. We dropped like ninepins on the grass by the roadside. There was a thin willow hedge, but no bank, and nothing else between us and the battery. A fusillade followed, a dozen shells bursting all round us, cutting the telegraph wires above our heads. The fuse setting was a little long and the bullets swept over harmlessly into the vineyard on the hillside. The resin filling of the shells fell about us and on us. The firing lasted five minutes, then they slewed left, and fired a few hundred yards ahead of us. We lay where we were for half an hour. It seemed impossible to move without being seen. The 17-inch shells were rushing over and falling on the top of the bank above. The trees there jumped into the air. Ahead and round a bend we heard a steady detonation of small high explosive shells in the trenches on the river-front of the town. G. crawled ahead

till he could see round the bend, but quickly crawled back, rather sick at what he had seen in the trenches ahead. Presently the detonations began to approach us along the road. We wriggled round and crawled back on our stomachs along the hedge. Shrapnel fire began again round about us, but now we had got under a hedgerow bank that gave some shelter. Across a gap in the hedge the shallow ditch was full of Serbians. Lying by the roadside I longed greatly to be over the gap and amongst them, in company. It seemed that it would be more protected there. The high explosive fire was coming nearer again, and, as a choice of evils, we started to crawl home. We crawled and crept half a mile, through all kinds of garbage and filth in the ditch and on the road, bursting with heat and fatigue. When we were clear of the head of the island we could crouch and run faster. So we got back to the culvert, and, just as animals are careful not to be seen approaching their lairs, we crawled again on our stomachs for the last hundred yards, in a shallow ditch, so that an observer might not notice us disappear behind the willow screen.

Sitting in the culvert on our boards, we passed the day. Once a field battery on the island opened fire with 3-inch shrapnel directly upon us and upon the trenches on each side of us. This was a nasty fire, because it raked across the mouth of our culvert. Several shells slapped into a hedgerow bank behind and within five yards of us, unexploded. A spent shell-case spun down and fell at our feet, splashing us. It came so slowly you could almost have caught it. When a big 9-inch 'Whispering Willy' passed, you reckoned anxiously the interval of time between its passing and the detonation, urging it inwardly—'Go on, go on!' After the burst the langridge could be heard buzzing about for as much as ten seconds. If a piece was coming towards you, its noise ascended in pitch.

A JOURNEY TO THE GRAD.

Night fell. Fire slackened. We crept out, drank from the spring, and ate bread, ducking under cover when the searchlight swept along. An orderly arrived from Major S. with a letter. Our interpreter pretended to read it by the light of a match hidden behind a screen of coats. He said hurriedly 'He says you are to be very careful. He expects the Austrians cross to-night.' It was clear that he was in such a blue funk of the light that he had

not really read the letter. He was taken into an enclosed shelter in the neighbouring trench, and made to spell out its true meaning. S. had written : ' I expect the Grad to be bombarded to-night. I want your explosives removed to a place of safety, lest an explosion should injure my men there.' We had no means of obtaining transport to remove all the stuff ; it needed nine bullock-carts. We agreed that the best we could do was to take the stuff out of the exposed shed where it was, inside the Grad, and space it out under the inshore wall of the enclosure, on the inshore side, where it would be protected from direct hits. Falling stones from the wall would not detonate it. It would be practically safe there. I and G., the petty officer, were the folk to go and do this. V., the commissary, would come with us as interpreter.

The culvert had entwined itself in my affections as a place of refuge, and I did not at all like leaving it. But it was good to have something to do. We crept out and started along the dark road, soft with mud after a day of showers. Before we had gone a few yards the field guns began to crack again ahead of us, all along the island. It was too dark for us to be seen, but every sound was audible across the water. We walked as fast as might be on flat feet, blessing the soft places, cursing those which crunched. At the head of the island we came into very severe shrapnel fire. The flashes followed each other incessantly along the road, and the ' whiz-bang ' of the bursts kept us ducking and crouching. A nightmare thing was that the road was snared with fallen telegraph wires, which constantly entangled us, and from which we could not get free in the dark without a horrid jangling noise. One such noise concentrated the fire on us. In the dark I could see spent shrapnel bullets, glowing red-hot, jerked across the road like marbles. A splinter or something grazed the corner of my eyebrow, making a bleeding scratch. I wanted very much to lie down under the hedge. We stole on, spaced out to twenty yards to avoid a tramp. I think it would have been impossible to face the detonations but for the entirely mistaken feeling that surely one would have just time to dodge when the next came.

It seemed to last for ever ; it did take a quarter of an hour to get past the exposed part of the road, and to reach the embankment and the first of the shelter-trenches on the river front of the town. In them there was comparative safety, and we tumbled down into the first, one by one, I, at least, with great relief. We had had the same sort of fun that the tin rabbits have in the shooting

galleries. It was still difficult going. The trenches had been pounded into holes and mounds by high explosive shell, and were slimy with mud. We fell and floundered from hole to hole. The soldiers were gathered in silent knots about the killed and wounded. In the dark you could see only blots on the ground, amongst the shining pools. The wounded made no sound, but sometimes as one saw a strange uniform pass he would say in a low voice '*ranyen*' (wounded) and no more. The least noise drew fire. So we came out of the trenches into the dark town. The houses lay about the streets. We passed the ruins of the military station where we had been when the first shells fell, and got into the Grad. Here all was quiet. V., our commissary, could talk no English, and an effort to get soldiers to help us from the *Narednik* in charge there ran badly aground. The *Narednik*, as far as I could make out, kept assuring us that the Grad never had been bombarded and never would be bombarded, and that it was quite needless to do anything. A lucky chance disclosed that V. could talk German. We came to close quarters, and, at last, a dozen weary soldiers were marched up from a gun position on the river side of the enclosure. The soldiers were worn out, very nervous of their burdens, and kept putting them down on the ground and sitting down themselves in the dark, without saying a word or answering when exhorted. By patting them on the back and assuring them that it was quite all right, slowly we got the lot lifted out of the shed, through a low postern, and spaced out at ten yards' interval on the protected side of the inshore wall. It was now midnight and there was only one thing left to move when there came the familiar screech and flash, and a 12-inch shell fell and burst within the Grad. We knocked off, having done what we had to do. The soldiers disappeared into the town. The first shot was a short one, because the bombardment that now began afresh was not of the Grad, but of the town, the shells flying over the Grad.

The fire was so hot that it seemed impossible to get back through the town. Besides, I preferred not to pass along the river road again till something more encouraging in the way of a lull should come along. The Grad was as good a place to stay in as any. I asked the *Narednik* if there was anywhere to sleep. A cellar in a ruined building just by the gate was found, but the light of a match showed it to be full of wounded and refugees, without a foot of clear space. Then he showed me a tiny pent-house of wood he had stuck up against the wall of the Grad itself, the size and height of a rabbit

hutch. There were six men stretched under it already, but he assured me they were some of the best burghers of the town. A straw palliasse was thrust in, and as it was now raining hard and very cold I and G. were glad to crawl under. Above us rose the thick old wall, some fifty feet high. On the right, towards the river, a tower cut the night sky. Before us the ruins of the town were clearly visible. Bugs from the palliasse crawled over my face, but I was so done that not even that could prevent my dozing off.

About 3 A.M. I was awakened by a terrific explosion and crash alongside. The bombardment of the Grad had begun. There followed the worst of all that time. It was pitch dark. All the big howitzers were turned on to the Grad and the big shells followed each other in a train, some coming over the wall above our heads, visible meteors of light flashing down out of the dark, and bursting among the ruins a few yards in front of us. Then the fragments would fly back and strike flashes of light out of the stones above us. Oftener they burst behind us in the Grad. Some struck the wall. Then part of the top of it fell over in our direction, and bits thundered on our rabbit-hutch. By chance none were big enough to come through. The folk sleeping under the wall were shrieking and running away. But all the ground before us was under heavy fire, from the big shells, big shrapnel, and incendiary bombs, and, as usual, there was nowhere to run to better than where we were. The wall was some cover, it was so thick, and the stones falling from the top of it were a minor risk. We got up after a bit and stood in the rain with our backs close against the wall. The people had all fled. For an hour there was no interval in the rain of projectiles. The ruins of the town took fire and burnt with a low flickering light. In one crashing detonation I saw the outline of the tower on our right crumble and change. (During this time a 17-inch shell fell on a gun-emplacement inside the Grad, 100 yards away, killing and wounding eleven out of fourteen.)

THE CROSSING.

After an hour the fire slackened and ceased. We crawled back under our pent-house. I was uneasy, because I thought after forty-eight hours of incessant bombardment a crossing was due, and guessed that this last display was to prevent reinforce-

ments for the river trenches being brought up through the town. We dozed off. I was awakened by someone shouting and shaking my shoulder. It was the faithful V., who had stuck it out in some corner near. 'Herr Capitän,' he was shouting, 'sie kommen.' No doubt whom he meant. I listened; the guns were absolutely still, a sinister change, but all along the river front there was a crackling of musketry, and suddenly, from the island, like mad little birds hopping on to the scene after the late earthquake, came the sound of the mitrailleuses. In the dark, I think, that was the wickedest and most suggestive sound of all. There was something impersonal about the big shells, but that intermittent popping seemed to tell the direct presence of the human devil himself.

V. told me that boats had already landed on the river front. I ran up a ruined wall near by and saw across the flat, in the first glimmer of dawn, some black blots on the water between the island and the town, a quarter of a mile away. Rifle fire began within a few hundred yards, behind the Grad. Whether it was ours or the enemy's we didn't know, so I and G. and V. started to run, and I ran as much like a hare as my riding boots would let me, out into the town, up the main street, and away from the river. The light of the burning town enabled us to see the timbers and walls fallen across the street, and the pits dugged by the shells; but it was slow going. A stray bullet or two flipped on the stones. A few men and women were fleeing out the same way. Women grasped at our hands, but what could we do but tell them they were all right, and encourage them to keep on in the way in which they were going? After a mile I felt we were clear, and we fell into a tired tramp up the main road to Vranovo, the railway station, there to get on to the telephone and await developments.

G. summarised the situation well: 'Now there's some,' he said, 'as might ask "Why run?"' but to me it seemed only right like.

(After two days more spent with Serbian headquarters on the river, the whole party made their escape by a night march to Palanka.)

THE BREADSIDE IN HOLLAND.

A COUPLE of years ago the writer, on one of his cross-country tramps, came through the moorlands and firwoods of Brabant upon the lost little village of Baarle, which is amongst the curiosities of Europe. Baarle is a sort of Siamese twins. The one twin is called Baarle-Nassau and the other Baarle-Hertog. And everything in it is double. There are two burgomasters, two policemen, two churches, two priests, two post offices, two inns. The reason is that some centuries ago the Lord of Baarle died without issue. His possessions were divided between the Count of Nassau (Prince of Orange) and the Duke (Hertog) of Brabant. Consequently one half devolved upon the Southern Netherlands and thence upon Belgium, and the other upon the kingdom of Holland. Baarle-Hertog is a little piece of Belgian territory surrounded on all sides by the Dutch Queen's lands, and so for the time being safe from German aggression.

The writer went to the inn, the Belgian one, and was met by a voluble hostess, an irrepressible fountain of local information. Of course she took an active part in the rivalries and jealousies of the two halves of the village. There was not much good in the aliens of Baarle-Nassau. Aliens never are much good. And she nobly and vigorously took the side of her Belgian fellow countrymen of Baarle-Hertog.

Imagine, therefore, the writer's surprise when in the course of her tale it transpired that her little sons were choir-boys in the Dutch parish. This seemed illogical, unpatriotic, treasonable. How could she thus unexpectedly forsake her most cherished ideals and her sacred allegiance to the divine leader of her own people, the priest of Baarle-Hertog?

'Ja, a'ge mien aan de broodkant komt . . .', was her reply and explanation—'Well, if you touch me on the breadside. . . .' It appeared that the Belgian priest was a temperance man. He had got the various rural co-operative societies, so characteristic a feature in Roman Catholic Holland and Belgium, the manure co-operative, the goats co-operative, the butter co-operative, and the like, to build a meetings-hall of their own, so as to avoid the former gatherings at the inn, whence the local economists used to return in all too confused a state of mind. The moral effect was

beneficent, but mine hostess was touched on the 'breadside,' and gravitated towards the foreigner.

The 'breadside' plays an important part in the political sympathies of the Netherlands. Nor is this peculiar to Holland. There is not an accusation more assiduously bandied about among the nations than the reproach of 'commercialism.' In England the lust of gold of the Spaniard, the gross materialism of the German, the almightiness of the American dollar, are as much articles of faith as is in Germany the 'Krämergeist' (or huckster spirit) of England. And yet it is a well-known fact that the private wealth of England and America is at all times lavished upon world-wide schemes for social betterment, moral advance, and religious propaganda. And mistaken, objectionable, arrogant, criminal though the methods of Spain and Germany may seem, it was nevertheless for an ideal that the former permanently ruined herself in the fanatical service of the Roman Church, and that the latter is ready to spend herself in the attempted leavening of the world through German 'Kultur.' The bulk of humanity are theoretical idealists, but it is the practical idealism of only a select few which can survive the stress of untoward circumstances. When a Brabant inn-keeper refers to her 'breadside' we smile, probably with a suspicion of contempt. But all gravely acquiesce in the classical '*primum vivere, deinde philosophari*,' which is but the same homely sense 'writ large.'

It is not without cause that this sentiment is at present prevalent in the Netherlands. The war has painfully touched that nation on the 'breadside,' and its idealistic qualities are but dimly before the eyes of most Dutchmen. If they speak of a European war, it is not in the sense of 'a war fought in the interest of Europe,' but simply of 'a war fought in Europe,' like the Austro-German of 1866, or the Swedo-Russian of 1700-21. For years on end Germany has so persistently preached in Holland, as in other neutral countries, the 'commercialism' of the English, that the bulk of the Dutch, already unfavourably disposed by a century and a half of unsuccessful naval and commercial conflict followed by a century of South African trouble, find it difficult to believe in the idealism and disinterestedness of England's present cause.

This distrust of England does not, however, make them believe in Germany's cause. For the Dutch detest and despise the Germans for their arrogance and their coarseness, and do not appreciate them in their new part of angels of light.

To them, or most of them, consequently, this war seems a war without a cause, a merely economical struggle for the control of the world's commerce. They certainly do not wish to see this preponderance in the hands of Germany. But neither do they think they have any reason for desiring it to rest with England. They therefore strive to remain strictly neutral, and hope that the war may end, the sooner the better, in a draw.

This peculiar attitude of mind may seem well-nigh incomprehensible to an Englishman, but it is not without interest from a psychological point of view, and from a political point as well, as it is common amongst a certain category of not necessarily pro-German neutrals. For one thing it helps to explain the absurdly didactic, not to say pedantic, manifestoes issued in four languages by bodies such as the Dutch Anti-War Council, and as the union *ad hoc* of Dutch professors and other men of note or importance.

O you foolish nations ! they exclaim. Why are you all trying to domineer over each other ? Why are you wasting your strength and your wealth, and ours ? Why can you not kiss and be friends at once and behave properly like us, who are content with what we have got ? For we outsiders can see quite clearly that none of you is fighting for any noble cause, but that you are all fighting for your own dirty and, besides, quite imaginary profit. And sincere Dutch Christians, also starting from the same undebatable and undebated premiss, that it is impossible for 'commercial' England to be the champion of an ideal cause, worry their poor brains out wondering how so many nations can be fighting 'without any cause' and how God can permit such folly. The dear Dutch talk about the war-psychosis of the belligerents, not suspecting that it might be themselves who are suffering from a peace-psychosis.

But if the Dutch and like neutrals are unwilling or, rather, unable to admit the fundamental idealism of the English cause, might they not at least admit and admire the good that is wrought, albeit indirectly, by the efforts of England and her allies ? Has the history of Prussia taught them nothing ? Has the Danish war taught them nothing ? Nor the rape of Hanover ? Nor the invasion of Belgium, and of Luxembourg, and of Serbia ? Should they not be thankful that there is a power whose supposed 'commercialism' prompts it to champion the integrity of its small neighbours across the water ? Should a mere sense of self-preservation not induce them to co-operate with that power, or, if they are

too prudent for that, at least to pray for its final success, *orare* if not *laborare*? If they are so anxious about their 'breadside,' might they not at least observe on which side their bread is buttered?

Again, Holland, or a great and influential section of it, replies in the negative. And this leads us deeper into our psychological analysis. It remains a remarkable fact that when Germany raised the cry against England's 'navalism' in order to neutralise the odium of her own militarism, and in order to forestall the world's criticism of her submarine warfare against non-belligerents, this outcry was at once re-echoed in Holland, and has been ever since. Yet the Dutch are as hostile to German or any other militarism as the English, and even more so. Also the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other like crimes raised in Holland a storm of unstinted indignation and execration against Germany.

The reason, however, for the popularity of the outcry against English 'navalism' lies deep down in Dutch history. As a modern political body Holland arose out of the struggle against her liege the King of Spain. On land that struggle was desperate, forcing the Dutch to strain every muscle and to spend every available penny during nearly a century. At sea, however, it was a profitable war, bringing in more wealth than it cost. There the Dutch swept the Spanish and Portuguese navies off the main, one by one capturing their enemies' colonies. And consequently at the time of the Westphalian peace Holland as surely ruled the waves as Britannia does now.

The Dutch statesmen and political philosophers, however, were too level-headed to imagine that the small commercial republic of the North would, in the long run, be able to retain the mastery of the seas any more than those of Genoa or Venice had been able. And they strove to make friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness while it was yet time. The great founder of international law, Grotius, formulated and expounded his famous doctrine of *mare liberum*.

But before this doctrine had had time to be fully accepted even in its native country, the counter-cry of *mare clausum* prevailed in England under the auspices of Oliver Cromwell. His Navigation Acts, backed by a rejuvenated and ever-increasing navy, inaugurated a struggle, all the more unequal because of the coinciding decadence and disorganisation in the Netherlands, where petty-minded parsimony and lust of lucre began to take the place of self-sacrificing

patriotism. The rule of the waves passed from Dutch into English hands.

This happened fairly and squarely enough, and was the ordinary luck of war. Still the Dutch would have needed to be angels or Early Christians to appreciate the change. They are neither. Although after the abolition of the Navigation Acts the situation has on the whole been quite tolerable for the Dutch, an Englishman has but to imagine *himself* for a moment in their position to realise that no amount of profit and prosperity can altogether obliterate the lingering sense of lost equality. A bankrupt does not thoroughly enjoy a stroll through his former park, and does not altogether feel at home with the new proprietor, however genial. That is how the German cry against English 'navalism' and for *mare liberum* has caused a dormant string in the Dutch harp to resound.

The Dutch are quite aware of the fundamental insincerity of Germany's new-born passion for liberty. They fully understand that, if Germany could, she would proclaim a *mare clausum* ten times more humiliating and vexatious than the one which Cromwell strove to enforce. Only, they think they are shrewd enough to see that Germany will never be able to assert herself to this extent. What they hope for is a naval balance of power followed by the internationalisation of the sea and the establishment, not only in practice, but also theoretically, of the principle of *mare liberum*.

An eminent Dutch statesman, the late Prime Minister, Dr. Samuel van Houten, writes in a recent number of his 'Political Letters':

'We do not desire a displacement of power. The humiliation of any of the great powers at war is not desirable because it would not be conducive to a lasting peace in the future. We do not desire an increase of power for our eastern neighbours, just as during the Napoleonic period we did not desire it for France. But it is a wide step from thence to active sympathy for their opponents, especially because the supremacy which on land is to be dreaded from the German-Austrian side, exists at sea already with England, and because at sea our rights as neutrals are at present measured out to us by England so scantily that as a seafaring and a colonial power we cannot desire this practice to become a lasting rule of international maritime law.'

The Dutch do not seem to realise how dangerous would be for the world at large, but especially for themselves, a neat balance of

power at sea, and how easily it might get upset. Balance of power on land depends on a thousand incalculable circumstances which may easily assert themselves to restore it again and again. Balance of power at sea, however, is so almost entirely a matter of technique and mathematics that if once it were destroyed it would be extremely difficult to re-establish it. Seeing Holland cannot reasonably expect ever to recover the rule of the waves for herself, she would be wiser to confide in the benignant supremacy of a tolerant and ever more liberal power than to speculate on a hazardous equilibrium.

What is there, however, an Englishman might ask, in all this double-Dutch talk about *mare liberum* and *mare clausum*? Is England's supremacy at sea necessarily synonymous with the principle of *mare clausum*? And is this war in any way concerned with either?

In the *Spectator* of July 23, 1915, Lord Cromer published an article headed 'Germania contra mundum,' wherein he inquires what England is fighting for. The reply is that she is fighting to maintain that freedom of the sea for which the Germans pretend to be striving. With them, however, this phrase is a euphemism for *the destruction of the supremacy at sea wherewith the national existence of England stands or falls*. Lord Cromer therefore seems to consider England's supremacy synonymous with the principle, not of *mare clausum*, but of *mare liberum*. And that is what until now it has been in practice if not theoretically, whatever Dr. van Houten or any other Dutchman may say.

The naval supremacy which an insular and commercial nation like England imperatively needs she has used most loyally and liberally for policing the oceans and keeping the trade routes clear for free trade and free competition. No honest merchantman has suffered, and many a one has profited by Britannia's rule.

Of late, however, that is ever since the beginning of this war, the application of England's supremacy has been slightly modified. For not only has this country destroyed the enemy's roving cruisers which preyed on its shipping, not only has it safeguarded its means of communication with the outer world, not only has it blockaded the ports of its opponents, it has also converted huge sections of *mare liberum* into *mare clausum* and has laid a controlling blockade along the coasts of neutral countries, investigating into the private correspondence of those neutral countries with other neutral countries, and paralysing their trade.

It is this new policy which has brought home anew to Holland its painful loss of power and dignity. Would England tolerate for one instant the blockading of *her* coasts, the opening of *her* private mercantile correspondence, the paralysing of *her* trade in a war, say, between Japan and Germany? 'What use have we,' ask the Dutch, 'for a *mare liberum* dependent on benevolent practice only, a practice which, as we now see, can be modified at a moment's notice? What we want is a *mare liberum* based upon inviolable principle.'

A temporary abeyance of the liberal practice might not have made the Dutch murmur, but the abnormal duration of this war has caused intolerable and permanent injury which no palliative Oversea Trust can cure. And the Dutch are not the only neutrals who are in this predicament, nor are they the only ones who grumble and who require all the clumsy stupidity and blundering brutality of Potsdam to prevent them from turning frankly pro-German.

To this attitude of mind one might reasonably object that to be permanently safe from the very real and very threatening Pan-Germanist peril is well worth some little hardship, some temporary loss in dignity even and wealth.

To this the average Dutchman would reply with an *omnia mutantur*. 'Sweden and France,' he will say, 'have helped to save us from Habsburg; England and a number of Continental States have helped to save us from Bourbon; Russia, Prussia, and England have helped to save us from Bonaparte. At present France, Russia, and England are checking Hohenzollern. But if these allies succeed in permanently laying low their enemy, how in the future is a sobered Germany to help in counterbalancing the aggression of some other imperialistic power?'

This argument is characteristically Dutch. It is characteristic of the un-European, unearthly, inhuman attitude which Holland takes up in international politics. English insularity is a by-word, but, politically speaking, Holland is twice as insular. She has the unsociable peculiarities of a *déclassé* who lacks the means for playing his previous part in society, but retains too much ancestral pride to associate unrestrainedly with his butcher and his bootmaker. This attitude has something quaint, picturesque, and even respectable, but it is not, socially speaking, healthy. So likewise Holland cannot *forget* she once was a leading power in Europe, and often cannot *remember* her present want of strength for enforcing a pristine dignity. Of late years she apparently has practised, with

great assiduity if not with unexceptionable skill, the art of the see-saw between the two groups of powers, and seems definitely to have pledged her soul to the policy of Kipling's 'cat who walked by himself.' Holland, of course, reckons with the balance of power in Europe, but she refuses to reckon herself among the weights. She prefers to remain a disinterested outsider, watching the rough and foolish boys at play—or at fight.

Need one wonder at the utter and pathetic forlornness of a state of mind too blinded by inveterate prejudice to penetrate to the ideals that underlie the politics of the day, and too confused even to discern aright the practical needs of the hour? For want of better, the finer spirits lose themselves amongst abstract theories about right and wrong, war and peace, justice and violence, carefully refraining from applying them to anything distantly resembling actual facts and situations. And the grosser elements which constitute the bulk of every nation bring all their energy to bear upon the 'breadside.' As the tides of the sea follow the moon, their sympathies fluctuate with their material profits, or, as many a Dutchman would prefer to read, in opposition to their losses.

For although war-profits are being made, it is a subject for debate whether they compensate, not to say exceed, the war losses. The prolonged mobilisation alone would be enough to ruin a small nation like the Dutch. Then there is the paralysing of transit trade and the unemployment amongst all categories of labourers. It is true that the institution of the Oversea Trust has considerably improved matters. But apart from the fact that this Trust is necessarily an expensively working organisation, its supposed subservience to England has caused the ill-will of the German providers of raw material. Coals are withheld from the Dutch Coal Syndicate. Sand is withheld from the famous Dutch china and pottery factories. One of these, 'The Sphinx,' has even had to close altogether. And these instances could be multiplied.

Even if, through the increased value of sea freights, of fish, and of agricultural products, the profits were to compensate or exceed the losses, the fact remains that, in the first place, the former are made secretly by the few and the latter are suffered openly by the many; and that, secondly, loss always impresses more than gain, misfortune than luck.

It can therefore not be denied that England's blockade and general maritime policy is slowly but surely alienating many a Dutchman's original sympathies for the Allies. If Germany had

an inkling of psychological values, she might even succeed in upsetting the scales in her favour.

Although, therefore, it is possible to explain, understand, and, granted the mistaken premisses, even to approve the Dutch conception, Holland's attitude still, because of these false premisses, remains deplorable, her blindness pitiable. 'Certain it is,' says Owen Wister in his 'Pentecost of Calamity,' 'that not as we see ourselves but as others see us, so shall we for ever be.' How much greater than the holding forth of pacifists and other closeted wise-acres, how much loftier, how much sublimer is the great American's message to his fellow-countrymen 'that some things are worse than war, and that you can pay too high a price for peace; but that you cannot pay too high for the finding and keeping of your own soul.'

Nevertheless, if England continues on her political course ever more liberally, ever more scrupulously, ever more considerately, she will finally overcome even a Dutchman's tough prejudice, and gather about her all nations. A bold stroke may score for the moment, but it is the gentleman who wins in the end.

I. I. BRANTS.

MOPSUS.

A SEPTEMBER IDYLL.

Quoniam convenimus ambo . . . Incipe, Mopse, prior.—VIRGIL

HE was lounging over the stubble on a slope of St. Catherine's Hill,

While the old swine grubbed contented, and the young pigs took their fill

Of the sweet corn grains that had fallen, and he found me under the hedge,

Looking up to the tower-crowned summit and down far over the ledge

Of the Downs to the vale of Medina and the reedy bed of the Yar,
And the mainland, a shadow; and one white gleam of the Solent afar;—

Mopsus, whose name was Marvin ('Joe Marrvin,' I think he said),

An urchin just turned fourteen, with a round and hard-looking head,

But a not unintelligent face, for he certainly was no fool,

And they'd taught him a thing or two at a Spartan village-school

Where force was not out of fashion: 'They clouted ma sisterr—she's slow

To pick up 'er learning—on th' 'ead with a book—the teacherrs, ye know.'—

Mopsus, the name just suits him, an ungainly brand of boy,

With a cheerful grin that marked him to grow up a hobble-de-hoy,

If it weren't for a certain humour, a something quaint in his talk,

A familiar twinkle, a manner of ease, a deliberate walk.

And he leaned on a broken pitch-fork ('To clout them,' I told him in chaff,

'Now you're on top!') as Eumaeus of old might have leant on his staff.

'And what do you think of, Mopsus?' the conventional poet must ask;

'Is it some of the songs they taught you—the pleasant part of your task

In that school where they clout the backward—of the noonday
bee that hums

So drowsy——' 'Aw noa,' quoth Mopsus, 'A'm mostly thinkin'
o' sums.'

'What, just arithmetic? Stuff that you learned in the standards?'

'Aw yuss,

An' a' arst ma dad fur a cycle—three poun', an' 'e make no fuss,
No more nor as if I arst 'im fur a five-shillun pair of shoes,

An'—parrdon, but, sirr, have ye read the paper?—'s ther any noos
O' the Darrdanelles? Ma brotherr the Isle o' Wight Rifles 'e joined,
An' there's lots of 'em killed a'ready, that last big landing, you
moind,

Wi' the 'Stralians an' Noo Zealans; *but ma brother e's not killed
yet.*—

(Mopsus, lightest of heart, unfeelingest!)—'Maister, ut's wet,
That bit o' long grass whur ye're sittun', an' yesterday, would ye
believe,

A' sat wi' ma coat aside me, an' a' hearrd just under ma sleeve
A kind o' a noise o' whustlun, an' a' reached out after ut so,
An' twas thurr in ma pocket—a' drew out quick—'twas an adderr,
ye know.'

(I rose rather hastily.) 'Mopsus, there's always an adder,' I
thought,

'In all the pleasantest hedges, so the tedious wise have taught.'
But I said, 'Good-bye, Joe Marvin,' and stooped to pick up my
hat.

'But say, do you never feel lonely and just inclined for a chat?'
'Aw noa,' he grinned, 'a'm talkun wi' myself most parrt o' the
day.'

'What, the same old pounds and shillings?—' Well, ye know, sirr,
it's just this way;

Ma father 'e give me ma wages, six shillun—enough, says he,
Fur a boy just done wi' schoolun',—an' thur's lots to buy, ye see:
Thur's cigarrettes for ma brotherr—anythink but Turrkish 'e like—
An' a bugle—the one a'm learrnun ain't mine—an' a tyre fur ma
bike—

As a' rode up the lane the firrst time, three punctures a' had an'
a burrst,

So ye'd best walk down—but a'll show ye the way to the hill-top
firrst.'

And he pointed over the stubble to a way he'd lately found
That led to the Steeper Down-crest by a sheep-track coiling round.

And I saw the lonely ocean with but one destroyer in sight
All round from Ventnor town to the Needles glimmering white,
A squat black beetle-body, sole witness in that wide scene
Of the silent, incredible war with the vanishing submarine ;
And was wrapt in the air divine that is unto the body as wings,
And unto the soul quintessence of glad, unspeakable things.
I think that, whenever I breathe it, 'twill bring back a thought
of that day—

Of Mopsus flicking the bushes in his slouching, leisurely way,
And the brother of whom he told me, as only fourteen tells,
Whole among thousands mangled at the deathly Dardanelles ;
Perhaps on a Turkish hill-side he is gazing up at the sky,
As he thinks of the far home-coming and the things that money 'll
buy ;

And a Spartan school has taught him some other, harder sums,
Which he calculates, like Mopsus, till a day of reckoning comes.

GUY KENDALL.

WITH THE GRAND FLEET.

A LETTER FROM BIG PETER.

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

[Though in the autumn of last year, Lieutenant Peter, R.M.A., passed out of the pages of 'Jitny and the Boys' and entered into his turret kingdom, he was not wholly cut off from contact with his devoted family. Letters of engaging candour filtered homewards through the meshes of the Censorship, and conveyed to Dad something of the essential atmosphere of the Grand Fleet and of the expanding mind of his big son. He has handed these letters to the present chronicler to deal with at his discretion.]

H.M.S. *Utopia*, c/o G.P.O.

'MY DEAR DAD,—You are really a terrible old gentleman. You should not be at large, and I am taking steps to have you arrested and interned. A week or two ago, in my simple unsuspecting way, I observed that I received a certain newspaper at breakfast each morning on the day following that of publication. I thought no harm in this, nor did the ship's Censor. But you must turn to the study of trains and time-tables, solve the problem of my whereabouts from this scrap of data, and locate with unerring precision the exact spot where my squadron of the Grand Fleet was lying at the moment of writing. You were right first time. It was very clever of you, but you should not have been such a vain old duffer as to crow about it to me. Because now that I know what an eagle eye you have, I must be extra careful how I write to you; the Censor will be on his guard, too—for of course I had to tell him of my indiscretion and of your discovery. Please understand, then, that I am not allowed to tell you any military details of my ship or to say anything to indicate whether she is at sea or in harbour.'

['You need not worry,' replied Dad rather nastily, 'I know all about your precious ship. She has eight 15-inch guns disposed in four turrets on the middle line so that the whole heavy battery can be fired on either broadside. She carries twelve 6-inch guns for meeting attacks from mosquito craft. Her designed speed is

twenty-five knots. Is there anything else you would like to know? ' Peter made no reply to this regrettable outburst.]

' We commissioned the old dear in the ———, a very new ship's company as new as the ship herself, and she was a mass of wet paint, swarming with dockyard mateys, and more like a barracks under construction than a brand new super-super of the latest design in naval frightfulness. We were obliged to stay on shore until the cabins and the wardroom had been put into living order.

' We are an aristocrat among ships. There is no filthy mess of coaling, for we burn no coal. We pump heavy oil into our tanks from the big stores at ——— or from the tank-steamers at sea. There is no mess, no grime of coaling, only a rather noisome smell when in a following wind the oily smoke droops down upon our decks and is sucked in through the mushroom ventilators.

' My first night-watch at sea lives in my memory. I was control officer of a battery of six 6-inch guns for use against fast light mosquito craft which might try the forlorn hazard of a dash to within easy torpedo range of about 500 yards. Torpedoes are useless against moving ships unless fired close up. This form of surprise attack has been very rare, and the aggressors have, I believe, always been sunk by gunfire. But it is always a possibility. Even in clear weather one cannot see for more than a mile at night, and a destroyer could rush in at full speed upon a zigzag track to within point-blank range in about a minute. Direct-aimed fire would fail at such a small, rapidly moving mark. But there is no time to lose, no time at all.

' My control station is on the compass platform, right up at the top of the pagoda-like superstructure on a level with the funnel tops, and is quite exposed save for a breast-high canvas screen round the railings. That first night in mid-winter was very cold and very damp—a penetrating damp which went through a double pair of fur gloves and motor-gauntlets as if they had been made of paper. Later, I sent for Canadian gloves and headgear, and defeated even the North Sea. They are made of sealskin, and cost a frightful lot of money, as Wee Roddy would say.

' There was a bright moon, so everything was less unpleasant than it might have been. From the height of my platform there is no appearance of freeboard; the ship's deck seems to lie flush with the water, and one sees it as a light-coloured shaped plank—such as one cut out when a child, and fitted with a toy mast.

' We are a very fast ship, but at this height the impression of

speed is lost ; the ship seems to plough in leisurely fashion through the black white-crested waves, now and then throwing up a cloud of spray as high as my platform, to descend with a crash upon "A" turret, which is none too dry a place to sleep in, for I have tried it. We don't roll appreciably, but slide up and down with a dignified pitch, exactly like the motion of that patent rocking-horse which I used to love in my old nursery.

'It does not do to think over-much—up here, almost alone. I know what is expected of me and exactly how to act, but if I worried much about my duties I might fail altogether when the emergency arose. Suppose that Fritz tried to rush us, and during that little minute of his dash within sight I lost my turnip of a head. Suppose that during those sixty vital seconds I became a gibbering, jumping idiot. One never knows. No, it does not do to think over-much up here.

* * * * *

'When one considers that up there on the platform, during my first night-watch, I was very sick indeed, it is rather a wonder that I remember so much about it. But though sick I was never in the least incapacitated for duty—which is remarkable.

'Between ourselves, old man, I am having rather too easy a time. We live under the best possible conditions, and I eat enormously—except sometimes at sea. My work is light, for all the peace frillings of parades, etc., which we Pongos delight in, have been suspended. Pongo is Navy for soldier and includes marines. Turret drill, gunnery training, looking after guards and sentries, and my watches aloft, do not nearly fill up my time. So I am devoting myself to wireless—an old hobby. I was always very keen on Morse, and now with daily practice I can read cypher hoists at seventeen words a minute and "clear" slightly slower. I shall get up to twenty to twenty-five words in a short time. Whenever the petty-officer telegraphist can manage to let me in, I read the Norddeich messages which the kindly Fritz always sends to us at 10 P.M. The special signs he uses for modified vowels were rather a bother at first. Fritz is a queer animal, very patient, and quite colossally stupid. Precisely on the stroke of ten each evening, Norddeich weighs in, first sending a long succession of "V's" in a high querulous buzz, and then retailing those German truths which he judges will be good for us to learn. Norddeich sends slowly at about sixteen words a minute and uses a mechanical

transmitter in the regular soulless Teutonic fashion. One can instantly recognise a man's individual touch upon the key, and even put a name to him, but the Norddeich transmitter is as inhuman as a gramophone. Fritz told us all about his capture of Verdun with full particulars of his spoils in guns and prisoners. "We—shall—be—in—Paris—in—four—days—what—is—the—Grand—Fleet—going—to—do—about—it?" His destruction of Manchester, Liverpool, and Newcastle by zeppelins was related with meticulous attention to corroborative detail. If we hadn't known our good Fritz it would have sounded quite alarming. Every night he tells us that he is sick of waiting for the Grand Fleet to come out of hiding. "We—know—exactly—where—you—are—and—every—goddam—ship—you—have—why—don't—you—come—out—and—fight?" He knows all right, the old dear, there's no doubt about that. He has had plenty of time to find out. Up in the wireless-room, reading those Norddeich messages, I feel quite friendly towards that silly old childish mechanical Fritz at the transmitter 500 miles away. He never misses a day. If ten o'clock arrived without his long buzz of "V's," followed by his jolly old stories, we should feel quite lonely and unhappy. We should feel as you would if the paper didn't turn up at breakfast time.

'Last week we had a real thrill. Word rushed round the ship that Fritz had at last put his cards on the table and that we were about to respond with heavy trumps. Orders had come from the Flagship, and presently out we went—a most tremendous spectacle. It was a real full-dress parade. From my eyrie up aloft, I could see the line of great ships stretching miles ahead till their shapes melted into the horizon, and looking backwards it was just the same—mile upon mile, ship after ship, as far as one could see and farther. The day was clear with a touch of spring, very bright and not too cold. One could not wish for a better day, or one more exactly suited to big guns. Our 'cavalry patrols' of destroyers were scouting out on either hand, far beyond our vision; and, beyond them again—many, many miles to the south—the battle-cruisers were sweeping round to play the hammer to our most massive anvil. We knew that Fritz was out beyond Heligoland, but that unless he meant real business we could not possibly get at him. As it turned out, he was not out for risks; he would not put down his cards where he could not see to snatch them up. The long sight of aircraft has spoiled naval war, and with his eyes in the sky Fritz could see our battle-lines.

'It looked no larger than a breakfast sausage, and I had some difficulty in making it out—even after the Officer of the Watch had shown it to me. But at last I saw the watching zeppelin—a mere speck thousands of feet up and perhaps fifty miles distant. Our seaplanes roared away, rising one after another from our lines like huge seagulls, and Herr Zeppelin melted into the far-off background of clouds. He had seen us, and that was enough to keep the Germans at a very safe distance. In the evening, precisely at ten o'clock, Norddeich gave us a volley of heavy chaff, and assured us that we had only dared to come out when satisfied that their high seas fleet was in the Baltic! It wasn't in the Baltic; at that moment it was scuttling back to mine-fields behind Heligoland. But what could we do? When surprise is no longer possible at sea, what can one do? It is all very exasperating, but somehow rather amusing.

* * * * *

'The Navy is a very pleasing study to a Pongo like me. We Blue Marines are ultra-military, and perhaps at sea we exaggerate our stiff backs and grand salutes because they provide such infinite diversion for the naval officers. Just as you are most English when you are in Scotland, so we are most military when we are afloat. We are then self-conscious soldiers intent to display to the Navy a picture of discipline, as it is understood at Eastney, whereas on land we are among other soldiers—of a sort. But never on land or at sea do we bear ourselves or talk like sailors. That story which you sent me by our friend Boyd Cable about the Blue Marine armoured car in France was excellent reading, but quite wrong in atmosphere. In speech and manners his Marines were sailors—Matloes! It is lucky that Cable is with the Field Artillery and is not likely to meet a justly incensed sergeant from Eastney. The sergeant would be most respectful and polite, but Cable would never write of Blue Marines again—which would be a pity. The long-service military atmosphere of Eastney and Forton forbids the development of humorous talk; that of the sailors here is delightful—their accents have the rich flavour of the south coast, and they are as unconsciously amusing as short-service Cockney Tommies in the trenches. But only a Navy man can see anything to laugh at in an old Marine. He is a most portentous personage.

'The difference between our Corps and the Navy can be seen any day in the ways in which we deal with small offences on board

ship. A Marine sergeant makes an officer's enquiry into a terrifying inquisition, in which everything done or said is regulated by a formality amounting to religious ritual. The offender suffers the terrors of death before he is dismissed with some trifling penalty. We extract from the ceremony every scrap of militarism which it will yield. A naval officer, on the other hand, treats offenders in the most free-and-easy fashion. I saw once a petty officer bring up a troublesome ship's boy before the Officer of the Watch. You can imagine the miscreant standing at what he would call attention, with his cap in his hand and a scowl of apprehension on his grubby face, while the petty officer pours the story of his woes into the Officer of the Watch's judicial ear. "This 'ere boy, sir, was late five minutes when the 'ands fell in this morning, an' when 'e did turn up 'e was dressed like I dunno what—looked like a bundle of rags tied up ugly, 'e did."

'Officer of the Watch.—"Well, what's his character like, anyway?"

'Petty Officer.—"Well, sir (confidentially), I can't 'ardly keep my 'ands off 'im, sir."

'It was a complete denunciation and a complete declaration of that official tolerance for which the Navy is conspicuous.

'But fancy a sergeant of Blue Marines talking like that petty officer!

'I was engaged to-day in a particularly absorbing talk in the wardroom with a naval lieutenant when in comes the sergeant of the Marine Guard—sentries are our province—attracts my attention by halting with a crash of closed heels in front of me, and salutes with the full high Eastney swing. "Will you go the rounds now, sir?" he asks. "Yes," I say, "I am just coming," and he strides out like an automaton to the half-deck, where he awaits my pleasure. The naval lieutenant, to whom as to most of his fellows our military forms are a never-ending source of wonder, asks: "I suppose that is what you soldiers call frightfulness, isn't it? Thank Heaven, I'm not a Pongo! My nerves would be in shreds after a week of that sort of thing." So if the sailors amuse us Pongos, we are a source of diversion to them. It takes all sorts to make a world, even in a battleship.

* * * * *

'The wonderful thing has happened! I have been in action. It was not a great battle; it was not what the hardiest evening

newspaper could blaze upon its bills as a Naval Action in the North Sea. From first to last it endured for one minute and forty seconds; yet for me in was the Battle of the Century; for it was my own, my very own, my precious ewe lamb of a batti. —*Solus feci!* It was fought by me up on my compass platform and by my bold gunners in the 6-inch casemates below. All by our little selves, before any horrid potentates could interfere, we did the trick, and the enemy is at the bottom of the deep blue sea—it is not really very deep and is certainly not blue. What I most love about my battle is that it was fought so quickly that no one—and especially none of those tiresome folk called superior officers—had any opportunity of kicking me off the stage. I was On, right in the Front, and stayed there till all was over. All was over, quite over, and my guns had ceased firing before the Lord High Captain had fallen out of his bed in the Admiral's quarters—we do not run to an Admiral—and, best of all, before my own chief of Blue Marines had any chance to snatch the control away from me. He came charging up, red and furious, while the air still shook with my curtain fire, and wanted to know what the devil I was playing at. "I have sunk the enemy, sir," I said, saluting. "What enemy?" cried he; "I never saw any enemy!" "He's gone, sir," said I, standing at attention. "I hit him with three 6-inch shells, and he is very dead indeed." "It is all right, Major," called out the Officer of the Watch, laughing. "This young Pongo here has been and gone and sunk one of Fritz's destroyers. He burst her all to pieces in a manner most emphatic. I call it unkind. But he always was a heartless young beast." Then the Major, who is a very decent old fellow, cooled down, said I was a lucky young dog, and received my official report. He carried it off to the Lord High Captain—whom the Navy people call the Owner—and the great man was so very kind as to speak to me himself. He said that I had done very well, and that he would make a note of my prompt attention to duty. These high naval officers have the most charming manners; they are much more agreeable to speak to than are even Lord High Pongos. I don't suppose that I shall ever again fight such a completely satisfying naval battle, for I am not likely to come across another one small enough to keep wholly to myself.

'I will tell you all about it. I was up on the platform at my watch. My battery of six guns was down below, all loaded with high explosive shell weighing 100 lb. each. All the gunners were

standi eady for anything that might happen, but expecting nothin. So they had stood and waited during a hundred watches. It was greying towards dawn, but there was a good bit of haze and the sea was choppy. The old ship was doing her rocking-horse trick as usual, and also as usual I was feeling a bit squeamish; but nothing to worry about. As the light increased, I could see about 2000 yards, more or less—I am not much good yet at judging sea distances. The Officer of the Watch was walking up and down on the look out. "Hullo," I heard him say, "what's that dark patch three points on the starboard quarter?" He meant thirty degrees to the right, poor chap. I put up my glasses and so did he, and just then came a call from the look-out near us. As we looked, the dark patch changed to thick smoke and then out of the haze slid the high forepeak of a destroyer. I thought it was one of our escort, and so did the Officer of the Watch; but as we watched, the destroyer swung round, and we could see the whole length of her. Then, for the first time in my service, I saw the German Navy flag! It was an enemy which had blundered into us by mistake and was now trying hard to get away. I don't know what the Officer of the Watch did—I never gave him a thought—my mind simply froze on to that beautiful battery of 6-inch guns down below and on to that enemy destroyer trying to escape. Those two things—the battery and the enemy—filled my whole world.

'Within five seconds, I had called the battery, given them a range of 2000 yards, and loosed three shells—the first shells which I had seen fired in any action. They all went over, for I had not allowed for our height above the water. Then the Bosche did an extraordinary thing. If he had gone on swinging round and dashed off he might have reached cover in the haze before I could hit him. But his Officer of the Watch was either frightened out of his wits, or else was a bloomin' copper-bottomed 'ero. Instead of trying to get away, he swung back towards us, rang up full speed, and came charging in upon us so as to get home with a torpedo. It was either the maddest or the bravest thing which I shall ever see in my life. I ought to have been frightfully thrilled, but somehow I wasn't. I felt no excitement whatever; you see, I was thinking all the time of directing my guns, and had no consciousness of anything else in the world. The moment the destroyer charged, zigzagging as he came to distract our aim, I knew exactly what to do with him. I gave my gunners 1000 yards, rapid curtain fire from the whole battery, and you should just have seen those darlings

pump it out. I have seen fast firing in practice, but never anything like that. There was one continuous stream of shell as the six guns took up the order. Six-inch guns are no toys, and 100-lb. shells are a bit hefty to handle. Yet no quick-firing cartridge-loaders could have been worked faster than were my heavy beauties. I suppose that it took that destroyer about sixty seconds to reach the edge of my *rideau de feu*, and every ten seconds my lovely battery spat out six great shells! On came the destroyer, and round came our ship facing her. The Officer of the Watch was swinging our bows towards the enemy so as to lessen the mark for his torpedo. I swung my guns the opposite way as the ship turned, keeping them always on the charging destroyer. I could see them leaping backwards and forwards on their slides just like automatic pumps. Away towards the enemy the sea boiled as the torrent of shells hit it and ricocheted for miles.

'It was only for a moment that I looked down at the guns and at the smooth, quick, precise but unhurried movements of the gunners; for I had to watch with every scrap of my attention the zigzag course of my enemy and to keep my impenetrable curtain true in his path. He reached the edge of my curtain! It seemed to have been hours since I began to fire, but it couldn't really have been more than a minute; for even German destroyers will cover half a mile in that time. He reached the edge of my curtain, flung his bows straight towards us, and loosed a torpedo. At that very precise instant a shell, ricochetting upwards, caught him close to the water-line of his high forepeak and burst in his vitals. I saw instantly a great flash blaze up from his funnels as the high explosive smashed his engines, boilers, and fires into scrap. He reared up and screamed exactly like a wounded animal. It sounded rather awful, though it was only the shriek of steam from the burst pipes; it made one feel how very live a thing is a ship, how in its splendid vitality it is, as Kipling says, more than the crew. He reared up and fell away to port, and two more of my shells hit him almost amidships and tore out his bottom plates like shredded paper. I could hear the rending crash of the explosions through my ear-protectors, and through the continuous roar of my own curtain fire. He rolled right over and was gone! He vanished so quickly that for a moment my shells flew screaming over an empty sea, and then I stopped the gunners. My battle had lasted for one minute and forty seconds!

"But what about the torpedo," you will ask. I never saw it,

but the Officer of the Watch told me that it had passed harmlessly more than a hundred feet away from us. "You sank the destroyer," said the Officer of the Watch, grinning, "but my masterly navigation saved the ship. So honours is easy, Mr. Marine. If I had had also those guns of yours," he went on, "I would have sunk the beggar with about half that noise and half that expenditure of Government ammunition. I never saw such a wasteful performance," said he. But he was only pulling my leg. All the naval officers, from the Owner downwards, were very nice to me, and said that for a youngster, and a Pongo at that, I hadn't managed the affair at all badly. I fired eight shells per gun, plus the three sighting shots, fifty-one rounds, altogether about two and a half tons of ammunition. It sounds a lot, but there was a good lot to show for it.

'Would you believe it? When the racket was all over, everything explained, and my spirits were exalted to the highest pitch of self-satisfaction, my accursed stomach returned to its vomit, and I was confoundedly sick there on my watch. It was a most disgusting and humiliating exhibition. I think the smell of the lyddite must have upset me, for the wind blew the beastly green fumes over the ship. But the Officer of the Watch said it was remorse at being the death of a couple of hundred poor dear Bosches.

'I feel very old, Dad. I have fought my first battle, my very own battle, and I have killed two hundred men—ten times as many grown men as I have years to my age. Somewhere deep down in the North Sea lies a German destroyer, split, riven, shattered to pieces by my shells, and there it will lie until the Day of Judgment. But my soul is at peace. For you see, when my chance came I did not fail. I did not lose my head, I did not make a giddy ass of myself, I did not do any of those silly things which I have felt terribly afraid of doing. I have been blooded to the Great Game of War.

* * * * *

'The Officer of the Watch says that all the time the destroyer was charging she was firing at our platform with a quick-firing gun on her forepeak. And I knew nothing about it! This is the simple and easy way in which one earns a reputation for coolness under heavy fire.'

THE NEW 'UBIQUE.'

BY JEFFERY E. JEFFERY.

'IN THE LINE.'

WE are beginning now to regard ourselves as old stagers. We have been in action for nearly three months and in that period our education, in all the essential things, has advanced at a most surprising pace. Our most cherished illusions—culled from the newspapers for the most part—have been dissipated and replaced by the realities of this life. How often, I wonder, have we read that this is a war of attrition, or of artillery, or of finance, or of petrol. It is none of these things—at least not from our limited perspective. It is rather, to us, a war of mud, of paper (so many reams of it that the battery clerk's head buzzes and he cannot sleep at night for thinking of the various 'returns' that he must render to headquarters by 9 A.M. on the following day), of routine, and, above all, of marauding.

Wherefore we have adapted ourselves to circumstances. We have learnt that mud in itself is harmless and, since it is impossible to avoid, not worth noticing at any time; that unpunctuality in the submitting of any report or return demanded (however senseless) leads to far more unpleasantness from high quarters than any other sin one may commit; that routine is an irksome fetish of the Powers, but that it makes each day so like its predecessor that the weeks slip by and one forgets the date and almost the month. Lastly, we have learnt that the way to get things is to find them lying about; that while it is possible to indent for material, it is also possible to collect it if one takes the trouble. Timber, for instance, is required for building gun-pits, so are steel girders and brick rubble and brushwood. Well, do not the winds that shriek across this flat country blow down trees sometimes? Is there not a derelict railway station less than a mile away, and are not piles of rubble placed along the roadsides for mending purposes? It is pleasant, too, to have a real door to one's dug-out instead of a hanging corn sack: there is more than one partially ruined cottage near at hand. We are beyond the borderland of civilisation here; we have left our scruples behind us, for we know that if we refrain from taking those rails, those doors and window frames, those stout oak beams, someone else will have them shortly.

Circumstances, too, have brought it home to us that this war

is not so 'stationary' as we imagined. The relative positions of the two opposing armies remain the same, weary month after weary month. But the positions of the units composing them do not. We, for example, soon after our arrival in the country were sent up to be attached for instruction to a battery which was in action. It was explained to us that we would eventually 'take over' from that battery when its division went out to rest. We were at pains, therefore, to acquire all the knowledge we could in the time. The subalterns learnt the 'zone' which they would have to watch and fire over—every yard of it. The sergeants mastered the particular system of angles, 'registrations,' &c. in use; the signallers knew the run of their wires and understood the working of the circuit; the gun detachments, as a result of many hours of patient sand-bag filling and building, had begun to regard the place as their future home which it was meet to make as strong and (afterwards only) as comfortable as possible. And I, as the battery commander, besides being fairly confident of being able to 'carry on,' had noted with satisfaction, it being then midwinter, that there was a fireplace in what would be my room.

But did we 'take over' this position? Not we! Three days before the relief was due to take place we were sent off to another battery about which we knew nothing whatever and took over from it in a hurry and a muddle. Which strange procedure may be accounted for in one of two ways—as having been done expressly with a view to training us in dealing with an unexpected situation or, more simply, as merely 'Dam bad staff work.' We will leave it at that.

We occupied this new position, which, by the way, was a good one with a quite comfortable billet close at hand, for just three weeks. At the end of this time we had thoroughly settled down: we had done a great deal of constructive work—strengthening gun-pits, improving dug-outs, fixing voice-tubes for the passing of orders from the telephone-hut to the guns: we had laid out an extra wire to the O.P.¹ and relabelled all our circuit: we had cleaned up the wagon-line, rebricked the worst parts of the horse-standings and laid down brushwood so that the vehicles were clear of the all-pervading mud. We had arranged a bath-room for the men as well as a recreation room: we had built an oven (nothing acquires merit more simply in the eyes of the Powers than a well-devised oven—'Your horse-management is a scandal, Captain ——!' 'Yes, sir: but have you seen our oven?' Wrath

¹ Observation Post.

easily deflected and the Great One departs to make a flattering report). We had visualised at least twenty various 'stunts' that would make things safer, or more comfortable or more showy. We had reached a moment, in fact, when we were secretly rubbing our hands and saying 'the place is not only habitable but *good*: and we are about to enjoy the fruits of our labours thereon.' Which was a foolish attitude to adopt and one which now that we are a more experienced (and therefore a more cynical) unit would not be conceivable.

This time they moved the whole division, telling us (or the infantry rather) that the order should be regarded as a compliment in that the division had done so well that it was to be entrusted with a more difficult—which is a euphemism for a more dangerous—portion of the line.

Resignedly we packed up everything that we possessed, 'handed over' to the incoming battery, and, after failing to persuade the mess cat to accompany us, trekked off in a howling gale to the new place. This latter was not without merits, but had the great disadvantage that the only house available for a mess was nearly a quarter of a mile from the gun position.

The gun-pits, with the exception of one which had been partially reconstructed on sound principles, were bad. They had been built in the summer when everyone was saying, 'No use wasting material—we won't be here next winter.' But here we are all the same, regarding rather gloomily the defects which it will take weeks of hard work to remedy.

I overheard one gunner expressing his opinion thus to a friend of his.

'Well now, Dai,¹ I don't know what battery was here before us just now, but they weren't great workers, see. Our pit couldn't keep the rain out last night—what'll it do if a shell comes along?'

So I indented on the Royal Engineers (who own vast store-houses called in the vernacular 'Dumps') for rails and bricks and cement and sandbags, and I sent marauding parties out at night to collect anything that might be useful.

The men with a good-will which was beyond all praise, seeing that this was their third position within the month, started the arduous task of dismantling the old pits and dug-outs and building them anew—guessing by this time that in all probability they would be moved on elsewhere before their labours were finished. For that is one very definite aspect of this war. . . .

¹ David.

Our mess is a cottage which we share with a French family. Monsieur works in a mine close by, the numerous children play in the yard or are sent on errands, Madame in her spare moments does our washing for us. In the evening they all assemble in the kitchen and try to teach French to our servants. It amazes me to watch the sangfroid with which they go about their daily occupations regardless of the never-ceasing sound of guns and shells, regardless of the fact that the German line, as the crow flies, is less than two miles away. At 8 P.M. to the moment, whilst we are at dinner, they troop through into their own room to bed, each with a charming 'Bon soir, messieurs.' And on each occasion they make me personally feel that we are rather brutal to be occupying two-thirds of their house and spending our days making the most appalling havoc of their country. But I console myself by remembering that these people once had Uhlans in the neighbourhood and are therefore prepared to disregard minor nuisances such as ourselves.

Seven to seven-thirty P.M. is generally rather a busy time. Official correspondence, usually marked 'secret' and nearly always 'urgent,' is apt to arrive, and it is at this time that the intricate report on the day's shooting has to be made out and despatched to Group Headquarters. I am in the midst of this, working against time, with an orderly waiting in the kitchen, when the door is flung open and the Child enters with a cheery 'Good evening, Master.'

The Child calls me Master sometimes because I am always threatening to send his parents a half-term report on his progress and general conduct, or to put him back into Eton collars! He has now just returned from forty-eight hours' duty at the O.P. and presents an appearance such that his own mother would hardly recognise him. He wears a cap of a particularly floppy kind which he refers to as 'my gorblimy hat,' an imperfectly cured goatskin coat of varied hues which smells abominably, fur gauntlets, brown breeches, and india-rubber thigh boots. Round his person are slung field glasses, a prismatic compass, an empty haversack, and a gas helmet. Moreover, he is caked with mud from head to foot and flushed with his two-mile walk against the cold wind. For this is still March and we have had frost and snow and thaw alternately this last week.

'Anything happen after I left?' I ask. I had been up at the O.P. in the morning, and we'd 'done a little shoot' together.

'Nothing much. The Hun got a bit busy with rifle grenades

about lunch time and started to put some small "minnies"¹ into our second line. So I retaliated on three different targets, which stopped him p.d.q. Later on he put a few pip-squeaks round our O.P. and one four-two into the church. That's about all, 'cept that I had to dodge a blasted machine-gun when I was leaving at dusk—one of those 250-rounds-a-minute stunts, you know—and I had to nip across that open bit, in between his bursts of fire. The trenches are in Hell's own mess after this thaw—I went down to the front line with an infantry officer to look at a sniper's post he's located; we might get the "hows"² on to it. Any letters for me?

I push them across to him, but forbid him to remain in the room with that smelly coat on.

'Righto,' he grins, 'I'm off to have a bath and a shave before dinner.'

'But, my dear Child,' I say, 'you shaved last week! Surely——'

He grins again and saunters gracefully out. The Child is always graceful even when wearing a goatskin coat and ungainly thigh boots. But he's tired—I can see it in his eyes. His last two days have been spent as follows: At seven P.M. the night before last he arrived, in the capacity of liaison officer, at the headquarters of the battalion that we are supporting. He dined there and slept, in his clothes of course and always at the menace of a telephone, in a draughty hovel next door. Before dawn the next morning he was groping his way along three-quarters of a mile of muddy communication trench to the O.P. Arrived there it is his business to make certain that the telephonists below in the dank cellar are 'through' on every line. Then he ascends the ladder of the observation tower and stares through the loophole at the mists which swathe the trenches in front of him. And there, alternately with the subaltern of the other battery which uses this particular O.P., he must remain until it is again too dark to shoot.

There are diversions, of course, which help to pass the long hours. One is 'shooting the battery.' The F.O.O., as the subaltern on duty at the O.P. is called, is allowed, within fairly wide limits, to shoot when and at what he likes provided always that he has a reasonable objective. The principles laid down for him are simple enough: whilst never wasting a round if he can help it, he must also never miss an opportunity. That is to

¹ Minenwerfers, i.e. trench mortar bombs.

² Howitzers.

say that he must keep ceaseless watch for signs of movement or of new work being carried out by the enemy, for the flashes of hostile batteries, for suspected O.P.'s, for machine-gun emplacements and snipers' posts—for almost everything in fact. And when he sees, he must shoot—at a rapid rate and for a few moments only. For it is useless to 'plaster' the same spot for any length of time: the enemy will not be there—he must be caught unawares or not at all.

Another diversion is noting down the action of the hostile artillery, of which a report has to be rendered every evening. This is easy enough when he happens to be shelling at a convenient distance from you: it is not so easy, however, to count the number of 'pip-squeaks' that burst within a few yards of the house in which you are, or of 'minnies' that arrive in silence and explode with a terrific report apparently just at the foot of your tower, filling your observation room with acrid fumes.

Visitors appear at all hours—generals, staff officers, infantry colonels, trench-mortar or sniping officers. Each wants to examine some portion of the line from the vantage point of the tower, and each expects to be told unhesitatingly everything he wants to know. But to return to the Child and his tour of duty. After dusk he goes back to infantry headquarters to feed and sleep. Then follows another long day in the tower, at the end of which he is relieved by the 'next for duty' and returns to the battery with the privilege of breakfasting at any hour he likes on the following morning. The Child, I may here remark, has been known to eat poached eggs and marmalade at 12.30, and unblushingly sit down to sausages and mashed potatoes at 1.15.

But those two days at the O.P. are a strain. No hot meals, long hours, disturbed nights, shells for ever passing overhead, 'mutual exchanges of rifle grenades,' snipers' bullets which have missed their mark in our front line trenches flattening themselves against the outer wall of the house—there are pleasanter ways of living than this. And two things are always possible: one that the enemy may decide that this ruined house that he has watched for so long really *is* an O.P., and therefore well worth razing to the ground with heavy shell; the other that an attack (either with or without gas) may suddenly be launched against our line. In the first case the cellar *may* be a safe place, in the second there will be what the Child calls 'Hell's own job,' requiring a quick brain, keen vision, and the battery roaring in answer to sharp, curt orders. But if the two occur at once, as

is more than probable, why, then, the cellar is out of the question, for at no matter what cost the guns—always ready, always hungry—must be effectively controlled, the long-suffering, hard-pressed infantry must be supported. But at present these are dull days. Neither side is trying to do more than annoy the other.

'9.44 A.M. Working party seen at —, fired on, dispersed.'

'2.10 P.M. Fired 10 rounds at suspected O.P. at —. One direct hit with H.E. Drew quick retaliation on —.'

Thus is the daily report compiled. Is it worth all the trouble, the science, the skill, the organisation? It is, for everything, every little detail, every little effort helps to bring nearer the day when our guns will be pulled out on to the roads again, to be used for their legitimate purpose—the 'quick thing,' the fight in the open, 'the moving show.' . . .

Our colonel is 'some man'—which phrase, being expanded, means an individual whose keen eye misses absolutely nothing from the too-sharp rowel of a driver's spur to the exact levelling of a concrete gun-platform; whose brain is for ever evolving schemes for the undoing of the wily Boche; whose energy enables him to walk and ride fifteen to twenty miles a day, deal with all his official correspondence and yet find time to talk about hunting at odd moments. Periodically he holds conferences of battery commanders at his Group Headquarters. After seeing that everyone is provided for, he produces a large scale map with all the 'zones' marked on it, sticks out his chin in a manner peculiar to him and says:

'The Hun is becoming uppish again and must be suppressed. Now what I propose to do is this'—and he proceeds to detail something entirely original in the way of a bombardment. But he is seldom content to use his own batteries by themselves: nearly always he manages to borrow a few 'heavies' and some trench mortars of various sizes. With these at his disposal he feels that he can 'put up a good show,' as he says, and it must be acknowledged that he generally does.

In addition to these definitely organised bombardments he is constantly ordering small 'joy strafes' to be carried out. For instance, he will study the map and decide that two roads in a given area are in all probability used by the enemy at night. He will forbid anyone to shoot on the northern one (say) and order two batteries to put salvoes on to the southern one every night until further orders, 'just to impress the Hun,' as he puts it, 'with

the idea that the southern road is a distinctly unhealthy spot. Then he'll have double traffic on the northern one. We'll wait till we know for certain that it's his relief night and then we'll fairly plaster that road.'

This thoughtful scheme was duly carried out about a week ago—with what results, of course, it is impossible to say: but from the way the hostile batteries woke up and retaliated, we gathered that something had been accomplished.

And so the days and weeks pass by—quickly on the whole, so quickly that we are already beginning to badger the adjutant with queries as to when we are likely to get leave. There are rumours, too, that the division is shortly going out 'to rest.' The infantry deserve it, for theirs is the hard part: daily I admire them more, every man of them from the humblest private who digs in the slushy trenches or stands on guard in a sap thirty yards or less from the enemy and quite possibly on top of a mine to their brigadier who conceals his V.C. and D.S.O. ribbons beneath a rubber suit and spends more of his time in the front line trenches than out of them.

But for us gunners it is different. We live in comfort and in perfect safety (unless our actual position is spotted and 'strafed,' in which case we merely withdraw our men until the enemy's allowance of ammunition is expended). Except possibly for our hard-worked telephonists we need no rest. Moreover, it would be heart-breaking to leave the position that we have made so cosy, so inconspicuous, and, we all believe, so strong.

We happen to be close to a main avenue of traffic. All sorts of people pass by—'brass hats' going up to inspect the line, R.E. wagons laden with every conceivable kind of trench store, mining officers caked in yellow clay returning after a strenuous tour of duty underground, a constant succession of small parties of infantry who are either 'going-in' or 'coming out,' ration carts, hand-carts filled with things that look like iron plum-puddings but are really trench mortar bombs and, occasionally, an ambulance. Infantry officers or men who happen to halt close by are generally invited to have a look at the gun pits. More often than not some one of them recognises a friend or a relation in the battery: it must be remembered that we are a homogeneous division. If by chance we are firing when a party of infantry (unaccompanied by an officer) is passing, it invariably halts and watches the performances with huge interest and quite often with a shout or two of encouragement.

'Go it, boys, give 'em a bit more marmalade,' I heard one ribald private yell out, when to his joy he heard the order 'two rounds battery fire one second.' When the guns had flashed and roared in their sequence, and the shells had gone rumbling away towards the distant lines, he picked up his burden, hitched his rifle more comfortably across his shoulders, and went upon his way, remarking with a pleasant admixture of oaths:

'That'll give 'em something to think about for a while.'

This, on a minor scale, is an example of the great principle of infantry and artillery co-operation. I can picture that same private rejoining his platoon in the trenches and saying to his 'batty':¹

'Look you, Trevor, as I was coming up the road now just, I see a battery of our fellows givin' them — Hell.'

And his friend would answer perhaps:

'Well, 'tis fine to hear our shells come singing over. What about them fags, Tom? Did you get 'em?'

Neither of these men would know whether the rounds had been well or badly placed, but each would be left with the impression that the artillery exists for the purpose of helping him and his fellows when in difficulties and of preparing the way when the time comes. A small point, perhaps, but nevertheless a vital one. . . .

It is fortunate that amid all the horror and the misery and the waste that this war entails it is still possible to see the humorous side of things sometimes. Here is an example. A major on his way up to the front line saw a man hunting about amongst some ruins for 'souvenirs'—and this in a place which was in view of the Germans and only about 350 yards from their trenches. The major was justly annoyed: firstly the man was evidently wasting his time, secondly there was every prospect that hostile fire would be drawn to the spot. So he drew his revolver and put a round into the brickwork about six feet to one side of the man.

The effect was wonderful. The souvenir hunter, convinced that he had escaped a sniper's bullet by a mere inch, made a wild dive into a handy shell hole and lay low. Twenty minutes later he emerged, crawling on hands and knees through deep slime and eagerly watched by a working party who had seen the incident. He arrived, panting and prepared to give an account of his thrilling experience—only to be asked his name and unit and placed in arrest on a charge of loitering unnecessarily in a dangerous place thereby tending to draw fire!

¹ = pal or friend.

Another incident, not devoid of humour (though I cannot say that I thought so at the moment), occurred about a week after we had arrived at our present position. W——, the captain of the 'regular' battery which we had replaced, came over to inquire about a telescopic sight and a clinometer belonging to his unit which had somehow got mislaid during the muddle of 'handing over.'

'They must be somewhere here,' W—— suggested politely, 'and we *must* have them because we are going back into action to-morrow.'

I assured him that to the best of my belief I had only my own, 'but,' I added confidently, 'we'll go round and ask at each gun to make certain.'

The sergeant of No. 1 was quite positive. The corporal of No. 2 was apparently equally so, but I noticed the suspicion of a smile at the corners of his lips.

'Are you certain,' I repeated, 'that you've only got your own telescope and sight clinometer?'

The corporal's answer was positively brutal in its honesty. He winked—an unmistakable wink—and said:

'Well, sir, o' course I've got those what I pinched off t' batt'ry that was here before!'

If the mud had then and there engulfed me I should have been grateful. As it was I could only weakly murmur 'Fetch them at once,' and then glance round to see the expression on W——'s face. But he, good soul, was walking quietly away, though whether with the idea of relieving his own feelings or of allowing me to vent mine upon the corporal, I never dared to ask.

On the following day the corporal, who by the way is our professional comedian from Lancashire, saw fit to apologise. He did so thus:

'Sir,' he said as I was walking past his gun-pit. I turned and regarded him sternly, for I was still rather angry.

'I'm sorry about what happened yesterday,' he observed contritely. '*I didn't mean to make a fool of you!*'

The charm of this remark lies in the fact that, while disregarding the enormity of his offence in 'pinching' essential gun-stores from another battery, he was genuinely upset at having made *me* look ridiculous. Which being the case I could do nothing but accept his apology in the spirit in which it was offered.

LADY CONNIE.¹

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.

CHAPTER XIII.

DOUGLAS FALLODEN rode home rapidly after parting from Connie. Passion, impatience, bitter regret consumed him. He suffered, and could not endure to suffer. That Life, which had grown up with him as a flattering and obsequious friend, obeying all his whims, yielding to all his desires, should now have turned upon him in this traitorous way, inflicting such monstrous reprisals and rebuffs, roused in him the astonishment and resentment natural to such a temperament.

He, too, drew rein for a moment at the spot where Connie had looked out over Flood Castle and its valley. The beautiful familiar sight produced in him now only a mingling of pain and irritation. The horrid thing was settled, decided. There was no avoiding ruin, or saving his inheritance. Then why these long delays, these endless discomforts and humiliations? The lawyers prolonged things because it paid them to do so; and his poor father wavered and hesitated from day to day, because physically and morally he was breaking up. If only his father and mother would have cleared out of Flood at once—they were spending money they could not possibly afford in keeping it up—and had left him, Douglas, to do the odious things, pay the creditors, sell the place, and sweep up the whole vast mess, with the help of the lawyers, it would have been infinitely best. His own will felt itself strong and determined enough for any such task. But Sir Arthur, in his strange, broken state, could not be brought to take decisions, and would often, after days of gloom and depression, pass into a fool's mood, when he seemed for the moment to forget and ignore the whole tragedy. Since he and Douglas had agreed with the trustees to sell the pictures, that sheer bankruptcy might just be escaped, Sir Arthur had been extravagantly cheerful. Why not have their usual shooting party after all?—one last fling before the end! He supposed he should end his days in a suburban villa, but till they left Flood the flag should be kept flying.

During all this time of tension indeed, he was a great trial to

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his son. Douglas's quick and proud intelligence was amazed to find his father so weak and so incompetent under misfortune. All his boyish life he had looked up to the slender, handsome man, whom he himself so much resembled, on a solidier, more substantial scale, as the most indulgent of fathers, the princeliest of hosts, the best of shots and riders, chief indeed of the Falloeden clan and all its glories, who, like other monarchs, could do no wrong.

But now the glamour which must always attend the central figure of such a scene withered at the touch of poverty and misfortune. And, in its absence, Douglas found himself dealing with an enthusiastic, vain, self-confident being, who had ruined himself and his son by speculations, often so childishly foolish that Douglas could not think of them without rage. Intellectually, he could only despise and condemn his father.

Yet the old bond held. Till he met Constance Bledlow, he had cared only for his own people, and among them, pre-eminently, for his father. In this feeling, family pride and natural affection met together. The family pride had been sorely shaken, the affection, steeped in a painful, astonished pity, remained. For the first time in his life Douglas had been sleeping badly. Interminable dreams pursued him, in which the scene in Marmion Quad, his last walk with Constance along the Cherwell, and the family crash, were all intermingled, with the fatuity natural to dreams. And his wakings from them were almost equally haunted by the figures of Constance and Radowitz, and by a miserable yearning over his father, which no one who saw his hard, indifferent bearing during the day could possibly have guessed. '*Poor—poor old fellow!*'—he had once or twice raised himself from his bed in the early morning, as though answering this cry in his ears, only to find that he himself had uttered it.

He had told his people nothing of Constance Bledlow beyond the bare fact of his acquaintance with her, first at Cannes, and then at Oxford. And they knew nothing of the Radowitz incident. Very few people indeed were aware of the true history of that night which had marred an artist's life. The college authorities had been painfully stirred by the reports which had reached them; but Radowitz himself had written to the Head maintaining that the whole thing was an accident and a frolic, and insisting that no public or official notice should be taken of it, a fact which had not prevented the Head from writing severely to Falloeden, Meyrick, and Robertson, or the fellows of the College from holding a College meeting, even in the long vacation, to discuss what measures

should be taken in the October term to put down and stamp out 'ragging.'

Falloden had replied to the Head's letter expressing his 'profound regret' for the accident to Otto Radowitz, and declaring that nobody in the row had the smallest intention of doing him any bodily harm.

What indeed had anybody but himself to do with his own malignant and murderous impulse towards Radowitz? It had had no causal connection whatever with the accident itself. And who but he—and Constance Bledlow—was entitled to know that, while the others were actuated by nothing but the usual motives of a college 'rag,' quickened by too much supping, he himself had been impelled by a mad jealousy of Radowitz, and a longing to humiliate one who had humiliated him? All the same he hated himself now for what he had said to Constance on their last walk. It had been a mean and monstrous attempt to shift the blame from his own shoulders to hers; and his sense of honour turned from the recollection of it in disgust.

How pale she had looked, beside that gate, in the evening light—how heavy-eyed! No doubt she was seeing Radowitz constantly, and grieving over him; blaming herself, indeed, as he, Falloden, had actually invited her to do. With fresh poignancy, he felt himself an outcast from her company. No doubt they sometimes talked of him—his bitter pride guessed how!—she, and Sorell, and Radowitz together. Was Sorell winning her? He had every chance. Falloden, in his sober senses, knew perfectly well that she was not in love with Radowitz. Though no one could say what pity might do with a girl so sensitive and sympathetic.

Well, it was all over!—no good thinking about it. He confessed to himself that his whole relation to Constance Bledlow had been one blunder from beginning to end. His own arrogance and self-confidence with regard to her, appeared to him, as he looked back upon them, not so much a fault as an absurdity. In all his dealings with her he had been a conceited fool, and he had lost her. 'But I had to be ruined to find it out!' he thought, capable at last of some ironic reflection on himself.

He set his horse to a gallop along the moorland turf. Let him get home, and do his dreary tasks in that great house which was already becoming strange to him; which, in a sense, he was now eager to see the last of. On the morrow, the possible buyer of the pictures—who, by the way, was not an American at all, but a German shipping millionaire from Bremen—was coming down,

with an 'expert.' Hang the expert! Falloden, who was to deal with the business, promised himself not to be intimidated by him, or his like; and amid his general distress and depression, his natural pugnacity took pleasure in the thought of wrestling with the pair.

When he rode up to the Flood gateway everything appeared as usual. The great lawns in front of the house were as immaculately kept as ever, and along the shrubberies which bordered the park there were gardeners still at work pegging down a broad edge of crimson rambler roses, which seemed to hold the sunset. Falloden observed them. 'Who's paying for them?' he thought. At the front door two footmen received him; the stately head butler stood with a detached air in the background.

'Sir Arthur's put off dinner half an hour, Sir. He's in the library.'

Douglas went in search of his father.

He found Sir Arthur smoking and reading a novel, apparently half asleep.

'You're very late, Duggy. Never mind. We've put off dinner.'

'I found Sprague had a great deal to say.'

Sprague was the sub-agent living on the further edge of the estate. Douglas had spent the day with him, going into the recent valuation of an important group of farms.

'I dare say,' said Sir Arthur, lying back in his armchair. 'I'm afraid I don't want to hear it.'

Douglas sat down opposite his father. He was dusty and tired, and there were deep pits under his eyes.

'It will make a difference of a good many thousands to us, father, if that valuation is correct,' he said, shortly.

'Will it? I can't help it. I can't go into it. I can't keep the facts and figures in my head, Duggy. I've done too much of them this last ten years. My brain gives up. But you've got a splendid head, Duggy—wonderful for your age. I leave it to you, my son. Do the best you can.'

Douglas looked at his father a moment in silence. Sir Arthur was sitting near the window, and had just turned on an electric light beside him. Douglas was struck by something strange in his father's attitude and look—a curious irresponsibility and remoteness. The deep depression of their earlier weeks together had apparently disappeared. This mood of easy acquiescence—almost levity—was becoming permanent. Yet Douglas could not help noticing afresh the physical change in a once splendid man—how shrunken his father was, and how grey. And he was

only fifty-two. But the pace at which he had lived for years, first in the attempt to double his already great wealth by adventures all over the world, and latterly in his frantic efforts to escape the consequences of these adventures, had rapidly made an old man of him. The waste and pity—and at the same time the irreparableness of it all—sent a shock, intolerably chill and dreary, through the son's consciousness. He was too young to bear it patiently. He hastily shook it off.

'Those picture-chaps are coming to-morrow,' he said, as he got up, meaning to go and dress.

Sir Arthur put his hands behind his head, and didn't reply immediately. He was looking at a picture on the panelled wall opposite, on which the lingering western glow still shone through the mullioned window on his right. It was an enchanting Romney—a young woman in a black dress holding a spaniel in her arms. The picture breathed a distinction, a dignity beyond the reach of Romney's ordinary mood. It represented Sir Arthur's great-grandmother, on his father's side, a famous Irish beauty of the day.

'Wonder what they'll give me for that,' he said, quietly, pointing to it. 'My father always said it was the pick. You remember the story that she—my great-grandmother—once came across Lady Hamilton in Romney's studio, and Emma Hamilton told Romney afterwards that at last he'd found a sitter handsomer than herself. It's a winner! You inherit her eyes, Douglas, and her colour. What's it worth?'

'Twenty thousand perhaps.' Douglas's voice had the cocksureness that goes with new knowledge. 'I've been looking into some of the recent prices.'

'Twenty thousand!' said Sir Arthur, musing. 'And Romney got seventy-five for it, I believe—I have the receipt somewhere. I shall miss that picture. What shall I get for it? A few shabby receipts—for nothing. My creditors will get something out of her—mercifully. But as for me—I might as well have cut her into strips. She looks annoyed—as though she knew I'd thrown her away. I believe she was a vixen.'

'I must go and change, father,' said Douglas,

'Yes, yes, dear boy, go and change. Douglas, you think there'll be a few thousands over, don't you, besides your mother's settlement, when it's all done?'

'Precious few,' said Douglas, pausing on his way to the door. 'Don't count upon anything, father. If we do well to-morrow—there may be something.'

Four or five thousand?—ten, even? You know, Duggy, many men have built up a fortune again on no more. A few weeks ago I had all sorts of ideas.'

'That's no good,' said Douglas, with emphasis. 'For God's sake, father, don't begin again.'

Sir Arthur nodded silently, and Douglas left the room.

His father remained sitting where his son had left him, his fingers drumming absently on the arms of his chair, his half-shut eyes wandering over the splendid garden outside, with its statues and fountains, and its masses of roses, all fused in the late evening glow.

The door opened softly. His wife came in.

Lady Laura had lost her old careless good humour. Her fair complexion had changed for the worse; there were lines in her white forehead, and all her movements had grown nervous and irritable. But her expression as she stood by her husband was one of anxious though rather childish affection.

'How are you, Arthur? Did you get a nap?'

'A beauty!' said her husband, smiling at her, and taking her hand. 'I dreamt about Raby, and the first time I saw you there, in the old Duke's day. What a pretty thing you were, Laura!—like a monthly rose all pink.'

He patted her hand; Lady Laura shrugged her shoulders rather pettishly.

'It's no good thinking about that now. . . . You're not really going to have a shooting party, Arthur? I do wish you wouldn't!'

'But of course I am!' said her husband, raising himself with alacrity. 'The grouse must be shot, and the estate is not sold yet! I've asked young Meyrick, and Lord Charles, and Robert Vere. You can ask the Charlevilles, dear, and if my lady doesn't come I shan't break my heart. Then there are five or six of the neighbours, of course. And no whining and whimpering! The last shoot at Flood shall be a good one! The keeper tells me the birds are splendid!'

Lady Laura's lips trembled.

'You forget what Duggy and I shall be feeling all the time, Arthur. It's very hard on us.'

'No—nonsense!' The voice was good-humouredly impatient. 'Take it calmly, dear. What do places matter? Come to the Andes with me. Duggy must work for his fellowship; Nelly can stay with some of our relations; and we can send the children to school. Or what do you say to a winter in California? Let's have a second honeymoon—see something of the world before we

die. This English country gentleman business ties one terribly. Life in one's own house is so jolly one doesn't want anything else. But now, if we're going to be uprooted, let's enjoy it !'

'Enjoy it !' repeated his wife, bitterly. 'How can you say such things, Arthur ?'

She walked to the window, and stood looking out at the garden with its grandiose backing of hill and climbing wood, and the strong broken masses of the cedar trees—the oldest, it was said, in England—which flanked it on either side. Lady Laura was, in truth, only just beginning to realise their misfortunes. It had seemed to her impossible that such wealth as theirs should positively give out ; that there should be *nothing* left but her miserable two thousand a year ; that something should not turn up to save them from this preposterous necessity of leaving Flood. When Douglas came home, she had thrown herself on her clever son, confident that he would find a way out, and his sombre verdict on the hopelessness of the situation had filled her with terror. How *could* they live with nothing but the London house to call their own ? How *could* they ? Why couldn't they sell off the land, and keep the house and the park ? Then they would still be the Fallodens of Flood. It was stupid—simply stupid—to be giving up everything like this.

So day by day she wearied her husband and son by her lamentations, which were like those of some petted animal in distress. And every now and then she had moments of shrinking terror—of foreboding—fearing she knew not what. Her husband seemed to her changed. Why wouldn't he take her advice ? Why wouldn't Douglas listen to her ? If only her father had been alive, or her only brother, they could have helped her. But she had nobody—nobody—and Arthur and Douglas would do this horrible thing.

Her husband watched her, half smiling—his shrunk face flushed, his eyes full of a curious excitement. She had grown stout in the last five years, poor Laura !—she had lost her youth before the crash came. But she was still very pleasant to look upon, with her plentiful fair hair, and her pretty mouth—her instinct for beautiful dress—and her soft appealing manner. He suddenly envisaged her in black—with a plain white collar and cuffs, and something white on her hair. Then vehemently shaking off his thought he rose and went to her.

'Dear—didn't Duggy want you to ask somebody for the shoot ? I thought I heard him mention somebody.'

'That was ages ago. He doesn't want anybody asked now

said Lady Laura resentfully. 'He can't understand why you want a party.'

'I thought he said something about Lady Constance Bledlow?'

'That was in June!' cried Lady Laura. 'He certainly wouldn't let me ask her, as things are.'

'Have you any idea whether—he may have wanted to marry her?'

'He was very much taken with her. But how can he think about marrying, Arthur? You do say the strangest things. And after Dagnall's behaviour too!'

'*Raison de plus!* That girl has money, my dear, and will have more, when the old aunts depart this life. If you want Duggy still to go into Parliament, and to be able to do anything for the younger ones, you'll keep an eye on her.'

Lady Laura, however, was too depressed to welcome the subject. The gong rang for dinner, and as they were leaving the room, Sir Arthur said—

'There are two men coming down to-morrow to see the pictures, Laura. If I were you, I should keep out of the way.'

She gave him a startled look. But they were already on the threshold of the dining-room, where a butler and two footmen waited. The husband and wife took their places opposite each other in the stately panelled room, which contained six famous pictures. Over the mantelpiece was a half-length Gainsborough, one of the loveliest portraits in the world, a miracle of shining colour and languid grace, the almond eyes with their intensely black pupils and black eyebrows looking down, as it seemed, contemptuously upon this after generation, so incurably lacking in its own supreme refinement. Opposite Lady Laura was a full-length Vandyck of the Genoese period, a mother in stiff brocade and ruff, with an adorable child at her knee; and behind her chair was the great Titian of the house, a man in armour, subtle and ruthless as the age which bred him, his hawk's eye brooding on battles past, and battles to come, while behind him stretched the Venetian lagoon, covered dimly with the fleet of the great republic which had employed him. Facing the Gainsborough hung one of Cuyp's few masterpieces—a mass of shipping on the Scheldt, with Dordrecht in the background. For play and inter-play of everything that delights the eye—light and distance, transparent water, and hovering clouds, the lustrous brown of fishing boats, the beauty of patched sails, and fluttering flags—for both literary and historic suggestion, Dutch art had never done better. Impressionists

and post-impressionists came down occasionally to stay at Flood—for Sir Arthur liked to play Mæcenas—and were allowed to deal quite frankly with the pictures, as they wandered round the room at dessert, cigarette in hand, pointing out the absurdities of the Cuyp and the Titian. Their host, who knew that he possessed in that room what the collectors of two continents desired, who felt them buzzing outside, like wasps against a closed window, took a special pleasure in the scoffs of the advanced crew. They supplied an agreeable acid amid a general adulation that bored him.

To-night the presence of the pictures merely increased the excitement which was the background of his mind. He talked about them a good deal at dinner, wondering secretly all the time, what it would be like to do without them—without Flood—without his old butler there—without everything.

Douglas came down late, and was very silent and irresponsible. He too was morbidly conscious of the pictures, though he wished his father wouldn't talk about them. He was conscious of everything that meant money—of his mother's pearls, for instance, which she wore every evening without thinking about them. If he did well with the pictures on the morrow she might, perhaps, justly keep them, as a dowry for Nelly. But if not—He found himself secretly watching his mother, wondering how she would take it all when she really understood—what sort of person she would turn out to be in the new life to which they were all helplessly tending.

After dinner, he followed his father into the smoking-room.

'Where is the catalogue of the pictures, father?'

'In the library, Duggy, to the right hand of the fire-place. I paid a fellow a very handsome sum for making it—a fellow who knew a lot—a real expert. But, of course, when we published it, all the other experts tore it to pieces.'

'If I bring it, will you go through it with me?'

Sir Arthur shrugged his shoulders.

'I don't think I will, Duggy. The catalogue—there are a great many marginal notes on it which the published copies haven't got—will tell you all I know about them, and a great deal more. And you'll find a loose paper at the beginning, on which I've noted down the prices people have offered me for them from time to time. Like their impudence, I used to think! I leave it to you, old boy. I know it's a great responsibility for a young fellow like you. But the fact is—I'm pumped. Besides, when they make

their offer, we can talk it over. I think I'll go and play a game of backgammon with your mother.'

He threw away his cigar, and Douglas, angry at what seemed to him his father's shirking, stood stiffly aside to let him pass. Sir Arthur opened the door. He seemed to walk uncertainly, and he stooped a great deal. From the hall outside, he looked back at his son.

'I think I shall see M'Clintock next time I'm in town, Duggy. I've had some queer pains across my chest lately.'

'Indigestion?' said Douglas. His tone was casual.

'Perhaps. Oh, they're nothing. But it's best to take things in time.'

He walked away, leaving his son in a state of seething irritation. Extraordinary that a man could think of trumpery ailments at such a time! It was unlike his father too, whose personal fitness and soundness, whether on the moors, in the hunting field, or in any other sort of test, had always been triumphantly assumed by his family, as part of the general brilliance of Sir Arthur's rôle in life.

Douglas sombrely set himself to study the picture catalogue, and sat smoking and making notes till nearly midnight. Having by that time accumulated a number of queries to which answers were required, he went in search of his father. He found him in the drawing-room, still playing backgammon with Lady Laura.

'Oh Duggy, I'm so tired!' cried his mother plaintively, as soon as he appeared. 'And your father will go on. Do come and take my place.'

Sir Arthur rose.

'No, no, dear—we've had enough. Many thanks. If you only understand its points, backgammon is really an excellent game. Well, Duggy, ready to go to bed?'

'When I've asked you a few questions, father.'

Lady Laura escaped, having first kissed her son with tearful eyes. Sir Arthur checked a yawn, and tried to answer Douglas's enquiries. But very soon he declared that he had no more to say, and couldn't keep awake.

Douglas watched him mounting the famous staircase of the house, with its marvellous *rampe*, bought under the Bourbon Restoration from one of the historic *châteaux* of France; and, suddenly, the young man felt his heart gripped. Was that shrunken, stooping figure really his father? Of course they must have M'Clintock at once—and get him away—to Scotland or abroad.

'The two gentlemen are in the red drawing-room, sir!' Douglas and his father were sitting together in the library, after lunch, on the following afternoon, when the butler entered.

'Damn them!' said Sir Arthur under his breath. Then he got up, smiling, as the servant disappeared. 'Well, Duggy, now's your chance. I'm a brute not to come and help you, my boy. But I've made such a mess of driving the family coach, you'd really better take a turn. I shall go out for an hour. Then you can come and report to me.'

Douglas went into the red drawing-room, one of the suite of rooms dating from the early seventeenth century which occupied the western front of the house. As he entered, he saw two men at the farther end closely examining a large Constable, of the latest 'palette-knife' period, which hung to the left of the fireplace. One of the men was short, very stout, with a fringe of grey hair round his bald head, a pair of very shrewd and sparkling black eyes, a thick nose, full lips, and a double chin. He wore spectacles, and was using in addition, a magnifying glass with which he was examining the picture. Beside him stood a thin, slightly-bearded man, cadaverous in colour, who, with his hands in his pockets, was holding forth in a nonchalant, rather patronising voice.

Both of them turned at Douglas's entrance, surveying the son of the house with an evident and eager curiosity.

'You are, I suppose, Mr. Douglas Fallogen?' said the short man, speaking perfect English, though with a slight German accent. 'Your father is not able to see us?'

'My father will be pleased to see you, when you have been the round of the pictures,' said Douglas, stiffly. 'He deposes me to show you what we have.'

The short man laughed.

'I expect we know what you have almost as well as you. Let me introduce Mr. Miklos.'

Douglas bowed, so did the younger man. He was, as Douglas already knew, a Hungarian by birth, formerly an official in one of the museums of Buda Pesth, then at Munich, and now an 'expert' at large, greatly in demand as the adviser of wealthy men entering the field of art collecting, and prepared to pay almost anything for success in one of the most difficult and fascinating *chasses* that exist.

'I see you have given this room almost entirely to English pictures,' said Mr. Miklos, politely. 'A fine Constable!'—he pointed to the picture they had just been considering—'but not, I think, entirely by the master?'

'My great-grandfather bought it from Constable himself,' said Douglas. 'It has never been disputed by any one.'

Mr. Miklos did not reply, but he shook his head with a slight smile, and walked away towards a Turner, a fine landscape of the middle period, hanging close to the Constable. He peered into it short-sightedly, with his strong glasses.

'A pity that it has been so badly re-lined,' he said presently, to Douglas, pointing to it.

'You think so? Its condition is generally thought to be excellent. My father was offered eight thousand for it last year by the Berlin Museum.'

Douglas was now apparently quite at his ease. With his thumbs in the arm-holes of his white waistcoat, he strolled along beside the two buyers, holding his own with both of them, thanks to his careful study of the materials for the history of the collection, possessed by his father. The elder man, a Bremen ship-owner—one Wilhelm Schwarz—who had lately made a rapid and enormous fortune out of the Argentine trade, and whose chief personal ambition it now was to beat the New York and Paris collectors in the great picture-game, whatever it might cost, was presently forced to take some notice of the handsome curly-headed youth in the perfectly fitting blue serge suit, whose appearance as the vendor, or the vendor's agent, had seemed to him, at first, merely one more instance of English aristocratic stupidity. As a matter of fact, Herr Schwarz was simply dazzled by the contents of Flood Castle. He had never dreamt that such virgin treasures still existed in this old England, till Miklos, instructed by the Falloden lawyer, had brought him the list of the pictures to his hotel, a few days before this visit. And now he found it extremely difficult to conceal his excitement and delight, or to preserve, in the presence of this very sharp-eyed young heir, the proper 'don't care' attitude of the buyer. He presently left the 'running down' business almost entirely to Miklos, being occupied in silent and feverish speculations as to how much he could afford to spend, and a passion of covetous fear lest somehow A—, or Z—, or K—, the leading collectors of the moment, should even yet forestall him, early and 'exclusive' as Miklos assured him their information had been.

They passed along through the drawing-rooms, and the whole wonderful series of family portraits, Reynolds', Lawrences, Gainsboroughs, Romneys, Hoppners, looked down, unconscious of their doom, upon the invaders, and on the son of the house, so apparently

unconcerned. But Douglas was very far from unconcerned. He had no artistic gift, and he had never felt or pretended any special interest in the pictures. They were part of Flood, and Flood was the inseparable adjunct of the Falloden race. When his father had first mooted the sale of them, Douglas had assented without much difficulty. If other things went, why not they?

But now he was in the thick of the business, he found, all in a moment, that he had to set his teeth to see it through. A smarting sense of loss—loss hateful and irreparable, cutting away both the past and the future—burnt deep into his mind, as he followed in the track of the sallow and depreciatory Miklos, or watched the podgy figure of Herr Schwarz, running from side to side as picture after picture caught his eye. The wincing salesman saw himself as another Charles Surface; but now that the predicament was his own it was no longer amusing. These fair faces, these mothers and babies of his own blood, these stalwart men, fighters by sea and land, these grave thinkers and churchmen, they thronged about him transformed, become suddenly alien and hostile, a crowd of threatening ghosts, the outraged witnesses of their own humiliation. 'For what are you selling us?'—they seemed to say. 'Because someone who was already overfed must needs grab at a larger mess of pottage—and *we* must pay! Unkind! degenerate!'

Presently, after the English drawing-rooms, and the library, with its one Romney, came the French room, with its precious Watteaus, its Latours, its two brilliant Nattiers. And here Herr Schwarz's coolness fairly deserted him. He gave little shrieks of pleasure, which brought a frown to the face of his companion, who was anxious to point out that a great deal of the Watteau was certainly pupil-work, that the Latours were not altogether 'convincing,' and the Nattiers, though extremely pretty, 'superficial.' But Herr Schwarz brushed him aside.

'Nein, nein, lieber freund! Dat Nattier is as fine as anything at Potsdam. Dat I must have!' And he gazed in ecstasy at the opulent shoulders, the rounded forms, and gorgeous jewelled dress of an unrivalled Madame de Pompadour, which had belonged to her brother, the Marquis de Marigny.

'You will have all or nothing, my good sir!' thought Falloden, and bided his time.

Meanwhile, Miklos, perceiving that his patron was irretrievably landed, and considering that his own 'expert' dignity had been sufficiently saved, relaxed into enthusiasm, and small talk. Only

in the later Italian rooms did his critical claws again allow themselves to scratch. A small Leonardo, the treasure of the house, which had been examined and written about by every European student of Milanese art for half a century, was suavely pronounced—

‘A Da Predis, of course, but a very nice one!’ A Bellini became a Rondinelli; and the names of a dozen obscure, and lately discovered painters, freely applied to the Tintorets, Mantegnas and Cimas on the walls, produced such an effect on Herr Schwarz that he sat down open-mouthed on the central ottoman, staring first at the pictures and then at the speaker; not knowing whether to believe or to doubt. Fallogen stood a little apart, listening, a smile on his handsome mouth.

‘We should know nothing about Rondinelli,’ said Miklos at last, sweetly—‘but for the great Bode——’

‘Ach, Bode!’ said Herr Schwarz, nodding his head in complacent recognition at the name of the already famous assistant-director of the Berlin Museum.

Fallogen laughed.

‘Dr. Bode was here last year. He told my father he thought the Bellini was one of the finest in existence.’

Miklos changed countenance slightly.

‘Bode perhaps is a trifle credulous,’ he said in an offended tone.

But he went back again to the Bellini and examined it closely. Fallogen, without waiting for his second thoughts, took Herr Schwarz into the dining-room.

At the sight of the six masterpieces hanging on its walls, the Bremen ship-owner again lost his head. What miraculous good fortune had brought him, ahead of all his rivals, into this still unravaged hive? He ran from side to side,—he grew red, perspiring, inarticulate. At last he sank down on a chair in front of the Titian, and when Miklos approached, delicately suggesting that the picture, though certainly fine, showed traces of one of the later pupils, possibly Molari, in certain parts, Herr Schwarz slapped his well-covered thighs with—

‘Nein, nein!—Hold your tongue, my dear sir! Here must I judge for myself.’

Then looking up to Fallogen who stood beside him, smiling, almost reconciled to the vulgar greedy little man, by his collapse, he said abruptly—

'How much, Mr. Falloden, for your father's collection?'

'You desire to buy the whole of it?' said Falloden coolly.

'I desire to buy everything that I have seen,' said Herr Schwarz, breathing quick. 'Your solicitors gave me a list of sixty-five pictures. No, no, Miklos, go away!'—he waved his expert aside impatiently.

'Those were the pictures on the ground-floor,' said Falloden. 'You have seen them all. You had better make your offer in writing—and I will take it to my father.'

He fetched pen and paper from a side table and put them before the excited German. Herr Schwarz wrinkled his face in profound meditation. His eyes almost disappeared behind his spectacles, then emerged sparkling.

He wrote some figures on a piece of paper, and handed it to Douglas.

Douglas laughed drily, and returned it.

'You will hardly expect me to give my father the trouble of considering that.'

Herr Schwarz puffed and blowed. He got up, and walked about excitedly. He lit a cigarette, Falloden politely helping him. Miklos advanced again.

'I have, myself, made a very careful estimate——' he began, insinuatingly.

'No, no, Miklos,—go away!—go away!' repeated Schwarz, impatiently, almost walking over him. Miklos retreated sulkily.

Schwarz took up the paper of figures, made an alteration, and handed it to Falloden.

'It is madness,' he said—'sheer madness. But I have in me something of the poet—the Crusader.'

Falloden's look of slightly sarcastic amusement, as the little man breathlessly examined his countenance, threw the buyer into despair. Douglas put down the paper.

'We gave you the first chance, Herr Schwarz. As you know, nobody is yet aware of our intentions to sell. But I shall advise my father to-night to let one or two of the dealers know.'

'Ach, lieber Gott!' said Herr Schwarz, and walking away to the window, he stood looking into the rose garden outside, making a curious whistling sound with his prominent lips, expressive, evidently, of extreme agitation.

Falloden lit another cigarette, and offered one to Miklos.

At the end of two or three minutes, Schwarz again amended

the figures on the scrap of paper, and handed it sombrely to Falloden.

'Dat is my last word.'

Falloden glanced at it, and carelessly said—

'On that I will consult my father.'

He left the room.

Schwarz and Miklos looked at each other.

'What airs these English aristocrats give themselves,' said the Hungarian, angrily—'even when they are beggars, like this young man!'

Schwarz stood frowning, his hands in his pockets, legs apart. His agitation was calming down, and his more prudent mind already half regretted his impetuosity.

'Some day—we shall teach them a lesson!' he said, under his breath, his eyes wandering over the rose-garden, and the deer-park beyond. The rapidly growing docks of Bremen and Hamburg, their crowded shipping, the mounting tide of their business, came flashing into his mind—ran through it in a series of images. This England, with her stored wealth, and her command of the Seas—must she always stand between Germany and her desires? He found himself at once admiring and detesting the English scene on which he looked. That so much good German money should have to go into English pockets for these ill-gotten English treasures! What a country to conquer—and to loot!

'And they are mere children compared to us—silly, thick-headed children! Yet they have all the plums—everywhere.'

Falloden came back. The two men turned eagerly.

'My father thanks you for your offer, gentlemen. He is very sorry he is not able to see you as he hoped. He is not very well this afternoon. But I am to say that he will let you have an answer in twenty-four hours. Then if he agrees to your terms, the matter will have to go before the court. That, of course, our lawyers explained to you—'

'That will not suit me, at all!' cried Herr Schwarz. 'As far as your father is concerned, my offer must be accepted—or rejected—*now*.'

He struck his open hand on the polished mahogany of the table beside him.

'Then I am very sorry you had the trouble of coming down,' said Falloden politely 'Shall I order your carriage?'

The great ship-owner stared at him. He was on the point of losing his temper, perhaps of withdrawing from his bargain, when over Falloden's head he caught sight of the Titian, and the play of light on its shining armour; of the Vandyck beyond. He gave way helplessly; gripped at the same moment by his parvenu's ambition, and by the genuine passion for beautiful things lodged oddly in some chink of his common and Philistine personality.

'I have the refusal then—for twenty-four hours?' he said curtly.

Falloden nodded, wrote him a statement to that effect, ordered whisky and soda, and saw them safely to their carriage.

Then pacing slowly through the rooms, he went back towards the library. His mind was divided between a kind of huckster's triumph and a sense of intolerable humiliation. All around him were the 'tribal signs' of race, continuity, history—which he had taken for granted all his life. But now that a gulf had opened between him and them, his heart clung to them consciously for the first time. No good! He felt himself cast out—stripped—exposed. The easy shelter fashioned for him and his by the lives of generations of his kindred had fallen in fragments about him.

'Well—I never earned it!'—he said to himself bitterly, turning in disgust on his own self-pity.

When he reached the library he found his father walking up and down deep in thought. He looked up as his son entered.

'Well, that saves the bankruptcy, Duggy, and—as far as I can see—leaves a few thousands over—portions for the younger children, and what will enable you to turn round.'

Douglas assented silently. After a long look at his son, Sir Arthur opened a side door which led from the library into the suite of drawing-rooms. Slowly he passed through them, examining the pictures steadily, one by one. At the end of the series, he turned, and came back again to his own room, with a bent head and meditative step. Falloden followed him.

In the library, Sir Arthur suddenly straightened himself.

'Duggy, do you hate me—for the mess I've made—of your inheritance?'

The question stirred a quick irritation in Falloden. It seemed to him futile and histrionic; akin to all those weaknesses in his father which had brought them disaster.

'I don't think you need ask me that,' he said, rather sharply, as he opened a drawer in his father's writing table, and locked up the paper containing Herr Schwarz's offer.

Sir Arthur looked at him wistfully.

'You've been a brick, Duggy—since I told you. I don't know that I—had any right to count upon it.'

'What else could I do?' said Douglas, trying to laugh, but conscious—resenting it—of a swelling in the throat.

'You could have given a good many more twists to the screw—if you'd been a different sort,' said his father slowly. 'And you're a tough customer, Duggy, to some people. But to me'—He paused; beginning again in another tone—

'Duggy, don't be offended with me—but did you ever want to marry—Lady Constance Bledlow? You wrote to me about her at Christmas.'

Douglas gave a rather excited laugh.

'It's rather late in the day to ask me that question.'

His father eyed him.

'You mean she refused you?'

His son nodded.

'Before this collapse?'

'Before she knew anything about it.'

'Poor old Duggy!' said his father, in a low voice. 'But perhaps—after all—she'll think better of it. By all accounts she has the charm of her mother, whom Risborough married to please himself and not his family.'

Falloden said nothing. He wished to goodness his father would drop the subject. Sir Arthur understood he was touching things too sore to handle, and sighed.

'Well, shake hands, Duggy, old boy. You carried this thing through splendidly to-day. But it seems to have taken it out of me—which isn't fair. I shall go for a little walk. Tell your mother I shall be back in an hour or so.'

The son took his father's hand. The strong young grasp brought a momentary sense of comfort to the older man. They eyed each other, both pale, both conscious of feelings to which it was easier to give no voice. Then their hands dropped. Sir Arthur looked for his hat and stick, which were lying near, and went out of the open glass door into the garden. He passed through the garden into the park beyond walking slowly and heavily, his son's eyes following him.

CHAPTER XIV

OUT of sight of the house, at the entrance of the walk leading to the moor, Sir Arthur was conscious again of transitory, but rather sharp pains across the chest.

He sat down to rest, and they soon passed away. After a few minutes he pursued his walk, climbing towards the open stretches of heathery moor, which lay beyond the park, and a certain ghyll or hollow with a wild stream in it, that cleft the moor high up—one of his favourite haunts.

He climbed through ferny paths, and amid stretches of heather just coming to its purple prime, up towards the higher regions of the moor where the mill-stone grit cropped out in sharp edges, showing gaunt and dark against the afternoon sky. Here the beautiful stream, that made a water-fall within the park, came sliding down shelf after shelf of yellowish rock, with pools of deep brown water at intervals, overhung with mountain ash, and birch.

After the warm day, all the evening scents were abroad, carried by a gentle wind. Sir Arthur drank them in, with the sensuous pleasure which had been one of his gifts in life. The honey smell of the heather, the woody smell of the bracken, the faint fragrance of wood-smoke wafted from a bonfire in the valley below—they all carried with them an inexpressible magic for the man wandering on the moor. So did the movements of birds,—the rise of a couple of startled grouse, the hovering of two kestrels, a flight of wild-duck in the distance. Each and all reminded him of the halcyon times of life—adventures of his boyhood, the sporting pleasures of his manhood. By George!—how he had enjoyed them all.

Presently, to his left, on the edge of the heathery slopes he caught sight of one of the butts used in the great grouse-shoots of the moor. What a jolly party they had had last year in that week of wonderful October weather! Two hundred brace on the home moor the first day, and almost as many on the Fairdale moor, the following day. Some of the men had never shot better. One of the party was now Viceroy of India; another had been killed in one of the endless little frontier fights that are the price, month by month, which the British Empire pays for its existence. Douglas had come off particularly well. His shooting from that butt to the left had been magnificent. Sir Arthur remembered well how the old hands had praised it,—warming the cockles of his own heart.

'I will have one more shoot,' he said to himself with passion—'I will!'

Then, feeling suddenly tired, he sat down beside the slipping stream. It was fairly full, after some recent rain, and the music of it rang in his ears. Stretching out a hand he filled it full of silky grass and thyme, sniffing at it in delight. 'How strange,' he thought,—'that I can still enjoy these things. But I shall—till I die.'

Below him, as he sat, lay the greater part of his estate, stretching east and west; bounded on the west by some of the high moors leading up to the Pennine range, lost, on the east, in a blue and wooded distance. He could see the towers of three village churches, and the blurred greys and browns of the houses clustering round them—some near, some far. Stone farm-buildings, their white-washed gables glowing under the level sun, caught his eye, one after the other—now hidden in wood, now standing out upon the fields or the moorland, with one sycamore or a group of yews to shelter them. And here and there were larger houses; houses of the middle-gentry, with their gardens and enclosures. Farms, villages, woods and moors, they were all his—nominally his, for a few weeks or months longer. And there was scarcely one of them in the whole wide scene, with which he had not some sporting association; whether of the hunting-field, or the big November shoots, or the jolly partridge drives over the stubbles.

But it suddenly and sharply struck him how very few other associations he possessed with these places spread below him in the declining August sunshine. He had not owned Flood more than fifteen years—enough however to lose it in! And he had succeeded a father who had been the beloved head of the county, a just and liberal landlord, a man of scrupulous kindness and honour, for whom everybody had a friendly word. His ruined son on the moorside thought with wonder and envy of his father's popular arts, which yet were no arts. For himself he confessed—aware as he was, this afternoon, of the presence in his mind of a new and strange insight with regard to his own life and past, as though he were writing his own obituary—that the people living in these farms and villages had meant little more to him than the troublesome conditions on which he enjoyed the pleasures of the Flood estates, the great income he drew from them, and the sport for which they were famous. He had his friends among the farmers of course; though they were few. There were men who had cringed to him, and whom he had rewarded. And Laura had

given away plentifully in the villages. But his chief agent he knew had been a hard man, and a careless one; and he had always loathed the trouble of looking after him. Again and again he had been appealed to—as against his agent; and he had not even answered the letters. He had occasionally done some public duties; he had allowed himself to be placed on the County Council, but had hardly ever attended meetings; he had taken the chair and made a speech occasionally, when it would have cost him more effort to refuse than to accept; and those portions of the estate which adjoined the castle were in fairly good repair. But on the remoter farms, and especially since his financial resources had begun to fail, he knew very well that there were cottages and farm-houses in a scandalous state, on which not a farthing had been spent for years.

No, it could not be said he had played a successful part as a landowner. He had meant no harm to anybody. He had been simply idle and preoccupied; and that in a business where, under modern conditions, idleness is immoral. He was quite conscious that there were good men, frugal men, kind and God-fearing men, landlords like himself, though on a much smaller scale, in that tract of country under his feet, who felt bitterly towards him, who judged him severely, who would be thankful to see the last of him, and to know that the land had passed into other and better hands. Fifty-two years of life lived in that northern Vale of Eden; and what was there to show for them?—in honest work done, in peace of conscience, in friends? Now that the pictures were sold, there would be just enough to pay everybody; with a very little over. There was some comfort in that. He would have ruined nobody but himself and Duggy. Poor Laura would be quite comfortable on her own money, and would give him house-room no doubt—till the end.

The end? But he might live another twenty years. The thought was intolerable. The apathy in which he had been lately living gave way. He realised, with quickened breath, what this parting from his inheritance, and all the associations of his life, would mean. He saw himself as a tree, dragged violently out of its native earth—rootless and rotten.

Poor Duggy! Duggy was as proud and wilful as himself; with more personal ambition however, and less of that easy, sensuous recklessness, that gambler's spirit, which had led his father into such quagmires. Duggy had shown up well these last weeks. He was not a boy to talk—but in acts he had been good.

And through the man's remorseful soul there throbbed the one deep, disinterested affection of his life—his love for his son. He had been very fond of Laura, but when it came to moments like this she meant little to him.

He gave himself up to this feeling of love. How strange that it should both rend and soothe!—that it and it alone brought some comfort, some spermaceti for the inward bruise, amid all the bitterness connected with it. Duggy, in his arms, as a little toddling fellow, Duggy at school—playing for Harrow at Lord's—Duggy at college—

But of that part of his son's life, as he realised with shame, he knew very little. He had been too entirely absorbed, when it arrived, in the frantic struggle, first for money, and then for solvency. Duggy had become in some ways during the last two years a stranger to him—his own fault! What had he done to help him through his college life—to 'influence him for good,' as people said? Nothing. He had been enormously proud of his son's university distinctions; he had supplied him lavishly with money he had concealed from him his own financial situation till it was hopeless; he had given him the jolliest possible vacations, and that was all that could be said.

The father groaned within himself. And yet again—how strangely!—did some fraction of healing virtue flow from his very distress?—from his remembrance, above all, of how Duggy had tried to help him?—during these few weeks—since he knew?

Ah!—Tidswell Church coming out of the shadows! He remembered how one winter, he had been coming home late on horseback through dark lanes, when he met the parson of that church, old and threadbare and narrow-chested, trudging on, head bent, against a spitting rain. The owner of Flood had been smitten with a sudden compunction, and dismounting he had walked his horse beside the old man. The living of Tidswell was in his own gift. It amounted, he remembered, to some £140 a year. The old man, whose name was Trevenen, had an old wife, to whom Sir Arthur thought Lady Laura had sometimes sent some cast-off clothes.

Mr. Trevenen had been baptizing a prematurely born child in a high moorland farm. The walk there and back had been steep and long, and his thin lantern-jawed face shone very white through the wintry dusk.

'You must be very tired,' Sir Arthur had said, remembering uncomfortably the dinner to which he was himself bent—the chef, the wines, the large house-party.

And Mr. Trevenen had looked up and smiled.

'Not very. I have been unusually cheered as I walked by thoughts of the Divine Love!'

The words had been so simply said; and a minute afterwards the old pale-faced parson had disappeared into the dark.

What did the words mean? Had they really any meaning?

'The Divine Love.' Arthur Falloden did not know then; and did not know now. But he had often thought of the incident.

He leaned over, musing, to gather a bunch of harebells growing on the edge of the stream. As he did so, he was conscious again of a sharp pain in the chest. In a few more seconds, he was stretched on the moorland grass, wrestling with a torturing anguish that was crushing his life out. It seemed to last an eternity. Then it relaxed, and he was able to breathe and think again.

'What is it?'

Confused recollections of the death of his old grandfather, when he himself was a child, rose in his mind. 'He was out hunting—horrible pain—two hours. Is this the same? If it is—I shall die—here—alone.'

He tried to move after a little, but found himself helpless. A brief intermission, and the pain rushed on him again, like a violent and ruthless hand, grinding the very centres of life. When he recovered consciousness, it was with the double sense of blissful relief from agony, and of ebbing strength. What had happened to him? How long had he been there?

'Could you drink this?' said a voice behind him. He opened his eyes and saw a young man, with a halo of golden hair, and a tremulous, pitying face, quite strange to him, bending over him.

There was some brandy at his lips. He drank with difficulty. What had happened to the light? How dark it was!

'Where am I?' he said, looking up blindly into the face above him.

'I found you here—on the moor—lying on the grass. Are you better? Shall I run down now—and fetch someone?'

'Don't go—'

The agony returned. When Sir Arthur spoke again, it was very feebly.

'I can't live—through—much more of that. I'm dying. Don't leave me. Where's my son? Where's my son—Douglas? Who are you?'

The glazing eyes tried to make out the features of the stranger.

They were too dim to notice the sudden shiver that passed through them as he named his son.

'I can't get at any one. I've been calling for a long time. My name is Radowitz. I'm staying at Penfold Rectory. If I could only carry you! I tried to lift you—but I couldn't. I've only one hand.' He pointed despairingly to the sling he was wearing.

'Tell my son—tell Douglas——'

But the faint voice ceased abruptly, and the eyes closed. Only there was a slight movement of the lips, which Radowitz bending his ear to the mouth of the dying man tried to interpret. He thought it said 'pray!'—but he could not be sure.

Radowitz looked round him in an anguish. No one on the purple side of the moor, no one on the grassy tracks leading downwards to the park; only the wide gold of the evening—the rising of a light wind—the rustling of the fern—and the loud laboured breathing below him.

He bent again over the helpless form, murmuring words in haste.

Meanwhile after Sir Arthur left the house, Douglas had been urgently summoned by his mother. He found her at tea with Trix, in her own sitting-room. Reggie was away, staying with a school-friend, to the general relief of the household; Nelly, the girl of seventeen, was with relations in Scotland, but Trix had become her mother's little shadow and constant companion. The child was very conscious of the weight on her parents' minds. Her high spirits had all dropped. She had a wistful, shrinking look, which suited ill with her round face, and her childish parted lips over her small white teeth. The little face was made for laughter; but in these days only Douglas could bring back her smiles, because 'Mamma' was so unhappy and cried so much; and that Mamma should cry seemed to bring her whole world tumbling about the child's ears. Only Douglas, for sheer impatience with the general gloom of the house, would sometimes tease her or chase her; and then the child's laugh would ring out—a ghostly echo from the days before Lady Laura 'knew.'

Poor Lady Laura! Up to the last moment before the crash, her husband had kept everything from her. She was not a person of profound or sensitive feeling; and yet it is probable that her resentment of her husband's long secrecy, and the implications of it, counted for a great deal in her distress and misery.

The sale of the pictures as shortly reported by Douglas, had

overwhelmed her. As soon as her son appeared in her room, she poured out upon him a stream of lamentation and complaint, while Trix, hidden in her mother's skirts, was alternately playing with the kitten on her knee, and drying furtive tears on a very grubby pocket-handkerchief.

Douglas was on the whole patient and explanatory, for he was really sorry for his mother; but as soon as he could he escaped from her, on the plea of urgent letters and estate accounts.

The August evening wore on, and it was nearing sunset when his mother came hurriedly into the library.

'Douglas, where is your father?'

'He went out for a walk before tea. Hasn't he come in?'

'No. And it's more than two hours. I—I don't like it, Duggy. He hasn't been a bit well lately—and so awfully depressed. Please go and look for him, dear!'

Douglas suddenly perceived the terror in his mother's mind. It seemed to him absurd. He knew his father better than she did. But he took his hat and went out obediently.

He had happened to notice his father going towards the moor, and he took the same path, running simply for exercise, measuring his young strength against the steepness of the hill, and filling his lungs with the sweet evening air, in a passionate physical reaction against the family distress.

Eight miles away, in this same evening glow, was Constance Bledlow walking or sitting in her aunts' garden? Or was she nearer still—at Penfold Rectory, just beyond the moor he was climbing, the old rectory-house where Sorell and Radowitz were staying? He had taken good care to give that side of the hills a wide berth since his return home. But a great deal of the long ridge was common ground, and in the private and enclosed parts there were several rights of way crossing the moor, besides the one lonely road traversing it from end to end on which he had met Constance Bledlow. If he had not been so tied at home, and so determined not to run any risks of a meeting, he might very well have come across Sorell, at least, if not Radowitz, on the high ground dominating the valleys on either side. Sorell was a great walker. But probably they were at least as anxious to avoid a casual meeting as he was.

The evening was rapidly darkening, and as he climbed, he searched the hillside with his quick eyes for any sign of his father. Once or twice he stopped to call:

'Father!'

The sound died away, echoing among the fields and hollows of

the moor. But there was no answer. He climbed further. He was now near the stream which descended through the park, and its loud jubilant voice burst upon him, filling the silence.

Then, above the plashing of the stream and the rising of the wind, he heard suddenly a cry :

‘ Help ! ’

It came from a point above his head. A sudden horror came upon him. He dashed on. In another minute a man’s figure appeared, higher up, dark against the reddened sky. The man put one hand to his mouth, and shouted through it again—‘ Help ! ’

Douglas came up with him. In speechless amazement he saw that it was Otto Radowitz, without a coat, bareheaded, pale and breathless.

‘ There’s a man here, Falloden. I think it’s your father. He’s awfully ill. I believe he’s dying. Come at once ! I’ve been shouting for a long time. ’

Douglas said nothing. He rushed on, following Radowitz, who took a short cut, bounding through the deep ling of the moor. Only a few yards, till Douglas perceived a man, with a grey, drawn face, who was lying full length on a stretch of grass beside the stream, his head and shoulders propped against a low rock on which a folded coat had been placed as a pillow.

‘ Father ! ’

Sir Arthur opened his eyes. He was drawing deep, gasping breaths, the strong life in him wrestling still. But the helplessness, the ineffable surrender and defeat of man’s last hour, was in his face.

[Falloden knelt down.

‘ Father !—don’t you know me ? We’ll soon carry you home. It’s Duggy ! ’ No answer. Radowitz had gone a few yards away, and was also kneeling, his face buried in his hands, his back turned to the father and son.

Douglas made another agonised appeal, and the grey face quivered. A whisper passed the lips.

‘ It’s best, Duggy—poor Duggy ! Kiss me, old boy. Tell your mother—that young man—prayed for me. She’ll like to—know that. My love— ’

The last words were spoken with a great effort ; and the breaths that followed grew slower and slower as the vital tide withdrew itself. Once more the eyes opened, and Douglas saw in them the old affectionate look. Then the lips shaped themselves again to words that made no sound ; a shudder passed through the limbs, their last movement.

Douglas knelt on, looking closely into his father's face, listening for the breath that came no more. He felt rather than saw that Radowitz had moved still further away.

Two or three deep sobs escaped him—involuntary, almost unconscious. Then he pulled himself together. His mother? Who was to tell her?

He went to call Radowitz, who came eagerly.

'My father is dead,' said Falloden, deady pale, but composed. 'How long have you been here?'

'About half an hour. When I arrived he was in agonies of pain. I gave him brandy, and he revived a little. Then I wanted to go for help, but he begged me not to leave him alone. So I could only shout and wave my handkerchief. The pains came back and back—and every time he grew weaker. Oh, it was *angina*. I have seen it before—twice. If I had *only* had some nitrite of amyl! But there was nothing—nothing I could do.' He paused—and then added timidly—'I am a Catholic; I said some of our prayers.'

He looked gravely into Falloden's face. Falloden's eyes met his, and both men remembered—momentarily—the scene in Marmion Quad.

'We must get him down,' said Falloden, abruptly. 'And there is my mother.'

'I would help you to carry him, of course; but—you see—I can't.'

His delicate skin flushed deeply. Falloden realised for the first time the sling across his shoulder and the helpless hand lying in it. He turned away, searching with his eyes the shadows of the valley. At the moment, the spot where they stood was garishly illuminated by the rapidly receding light, which had already left the lower ground. The grass at their feet, the rocks, the stream, the stretches of heather were steeped and drenched in the last rays of sun which shot upon them in a fierce concentration from the lower edge of a great cloud. But the landmarks below were hard to make out—for a stranger's eyes.

'You see that cottage—where the smoke is?'

Radowitz assented.

'You would find a keeper there. Send him with three or four men.'

'Yes—at once. Shall I take a message to the house?'

Radowitz spoke very gently. The red gold of his hair, and his blue eyes, were all shining in the strange light. But he was

again as pale as Falloden himself. Douglas drew out a pencil, and a letter from his pocket. He wrote some words on the envelope, and handed it to Radowitz.

'That's for my mother's maid. She will know what to do. She is an old servant. I must stay here.'

Radowitz rushed away, leaping and running down the steep side of the hill, his white shirt, crossed by the black sling, conspicuous all the way, till he was at last lost to sight in the wood leading to the keeper's cottage.

Falloden went back to the dead man. He straightened his father's limbs, and closed his eyes. Then he lay down beside him, throwing his arm tenderly across the body. And the recollection came back to him of that hunting accident years ago—the weight of his father on his shoulders—the bitter cold—the tears which not all his boyish scorn of tears could stop.

His poor mother! She must see Radowitz, for Radowitz alone could tell the story of that last half-hour. He must give evidence too, at the inquest.

Radowitz! Thoughts, ironic and perverse, ran swarming through Falloden's brain, as though driven through it from outside. What a nursery tale!—how simple!—how crude! Could not the gods have devised a subtler retribution?

Then these thoughts vanished again, like a cloud of gnats. The touch of his father's still warm body brought him back to the plain, tragic fact. He raised himself on his elbow to look again at the dead face.

The handsome head with its grizzled hair was resting on Radowitz's coat. Falloden could not bear it. He took off his own, and gently substituted it for the other. And as he laid the head down, he kissed the hair and the brow. He was alone with his father—more alone than he ever would be again. There was not a human step or voice upon the moor. Night was coming rapidly on. The stream rushed beside him. There were a few cries of birds—mostly owls from the woods below. The dead man's face beside him was very solemn and quiet. And overhead, the angry sunset clouds were fading into a dim and star-strewn heaven, above a world sinking to its rest.

The moon was up before Radowitz came back to the little rectory on the other side of the moor. Sorell, from whose mind he was seldom absent, had begun to worry about him, was in fact on the point of setting out in search of him. But about nine o'clock he

heard the front gate open, and jumping down from the low open window of the Rectory drawing-room he went to meet the truant.

Radowitz staggered towards him, and clung to his arm.

'My dear fellow,' cried Sorell, aghast at the boy's appearance and manner—'what have you been doing to yourself?'

'I went up the moor for a walk after tea—and it was so gorgeous, the clouds—and the view. I got drawn on a bit—on the Castle side. I wasn't really thinking where I was going. Then I saw the park below me, and the house. And immediately afterwards, I heard a groaning sound, and there was a man lying on the ground. It was Sir Arthur Falloden—and he died—while I was there.' The boy's golden head dropped suddenly against Sorell. 'I say, can't I have some food, and go to bed?'

Sorell took him in, and looked after him like a mother, helped by the kind apple-faced rector, who had heard the Castle news from other sources also, and was greatly moved.

When Otto's exhaustion had been fed, and he was lying in his bed with drawn brows, and no intention or prospect of going to sleep, Sorell let him tell his tale.

'When the bearers came, I went down with them to the Castle, and I saw Lady Laura'—said the boy, turning his head restlessly from side to side. 'I say, it's awful—how women cry! Then they told me about the inquest—I shall have to go to-morrow—and on the way home I went to see Lady Connie. I thought she ought to know.'

Sorell started.

'And you found her?'

'Oh, yes. She was sitting in the garden.'

There was a short silence. Then Otto flung up his left hand, caught a gnat that was buzzing round his head, and laughed—a dreary little sound.

'It's quite true—she's in love with him.'

'With Douglas Falloden?'

Otto nodded.

'She was awfully cut up when I told her—just for him. She didn't cry of course. Our generation don't seem to cry—like Lady Laura. But you could see what she wanted.'

'To go to him?'

'That's it. And of course she can't. My word, it is hard on women. They're hampered such a lot—by all their traditions. Why don't they kick 'em over?'

'I hope she will do nothing of the kind,' said Sorell with energy. 'The traditions may just save her.'

Otto thought over it.

'You mean—save her from doing something for pity, that she wouldn't do if she had time to think?'

Sorell assented.

'Why should that fellow be any more likely now to make her happy——'

'Because he's lost his money—and his father? I don't know why he should. I daresay he'll begin bullying and slave-driving again—when he's forgotten all this. But——'

'But what?'

'Well—you see—I didn't think he could possibly care about anything but himself. I thought he was as hard as a millstone all through. Well, he isn't. That's so queer!'

The speaker's voice took a dreamy tone.

Sorell glanced in bitterness at the maimed hand lying on the bed. It was still bandaged, but he knew very well what sort of a shapeless, ruined thing it would emerge, when the bandages were thrown aside. It was strange and fascinating—to a student of psychology—that Otto should have been brought, so suddenly, so unforeseeably, into this pathetic and intimate relation with the man to whom, essentially, he owed his disaster. But what difference did it make in the quality of the Marmion outrage, or to any sane judgment of Douglas Fallogen?

'Go to sleep, old boy,' he said at last. 'You'll have a hard time to-morrow.'

'What, the inquest? Oh, I don't mind about that. If I could only understand that fellow!'

He threw his head back, staring at the ceiling.

Otto Radowitz, in spite of Sorell's admonitions, slept very little that night. His nights were apt to be feverish and disturbed. But on this occasion imagination and excitement made it impossible to stop the brain process, the ceaseless round of thought; and the hours of darkness were intolerably long. Memory went back behind the meeting with the dying man on the hill-side, to an earlier experience—an hour of madness, of 'possession.' His whole spiritual being was still bruised and martyred from it, like that sufferer of old whom the evil spirit 'tare' in departing. What had delivered him? The horror was still on him, still his master, when he became aware of that white face on the grass—

He drowsed off again. But in his half-dream, he seemed to be kneeling again—reciting Latin words—words he had heard last when his mother was approaching her end. He was more than

half sceptical, so far as the upper mind was concerned ; but the under-consciousness was steeped in ideas derived from his early home and training, ideas of sacrifice, forgiveness, atonement, judgment—the common and immortal stock of Christianity. He had been brought up in a house pervaded by the crucifix, and by a mother who was ardently devout.

But why had God—if there was a God—brought this wonderful thing to pass ? Never had his heart been so full of hatred as in that hour of lonely wandering on the moor, before he perceived the huddled figure lying by the stream. And, all in a moment, he had become his enemy's proxy—his representative—in the last and tenderest service that man can render to man. He had played the part of son to Falloden's dying father—had prayed for him from the depths of his heart, tortured with pity. And when Falloden came, with what strange eyes they had looked at each other !—as though all veils had dropped—all barriers had, for the moment, dropped away.

' Shall I hate him again to-morrow ? ' thought Radowitz. ' Or shall I be more sorry for him than for myself ? Yes, that's what I felt !—so marvellously ! '

So that when he went to Constance with his news, and under the emotion of it, saw the girl's heart unveiled—

—' I was not jealous,' he thought. ' I just wanted to give her everything ! '

Yet, as the night passed on, and that dreary moment of the first awakening earth arrived, when all the griefs of mankind weigh heaviest, he was shaken anew by gusts of passion and despair ; and this time for himself. Suppose—for in spite of all Sorell's evasions and concealments, he knew very well that Sorell was anxious about him, and the doctors had said ugly things—suppose he got really ill ?—suppose he died, without having lived ?

He thought of Constance in the moonlit garden, her sweetness, her gratefulness to him for coming, her small, white ' flower-face '—and the look in her eyes.

' If I might—only once—have kissed her—have held her in my arms ! ' he thought, with anguish. And rolling on his face, he lay prone, fighting his fight alone, till exhaustion conquered, and ' he took the gift of sleep.'

(To be continued.)

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE ADVERTISER, JUNE 1916.

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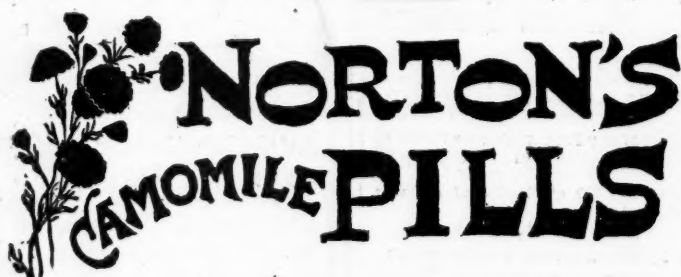
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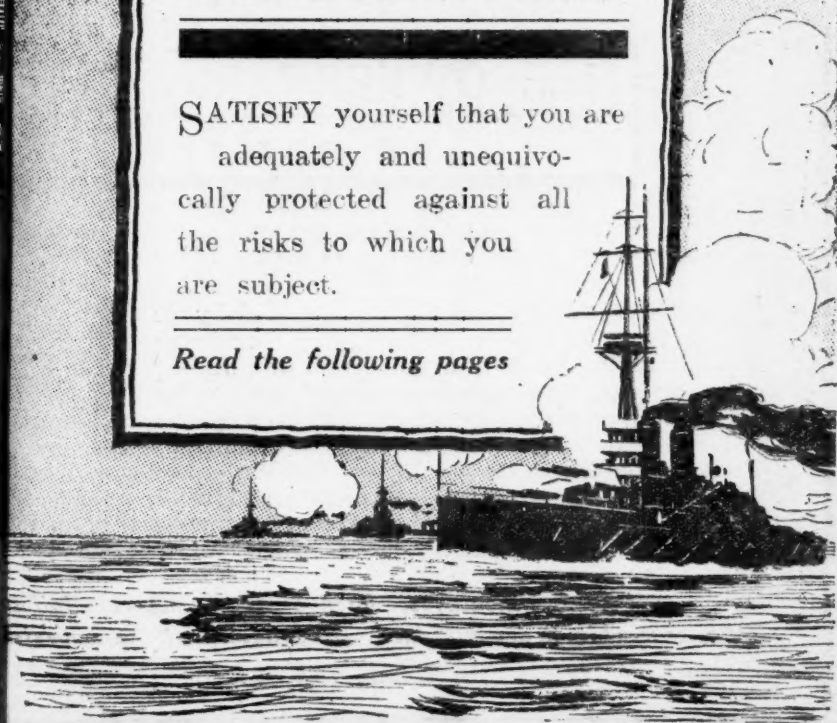
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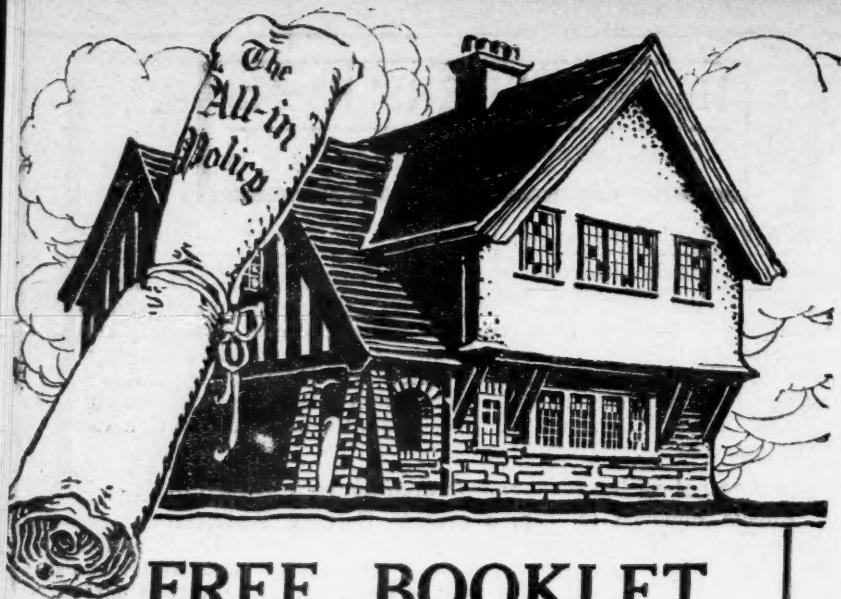
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JUNE 1916.

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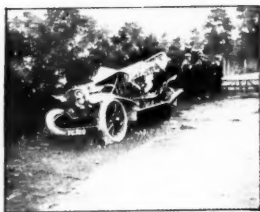
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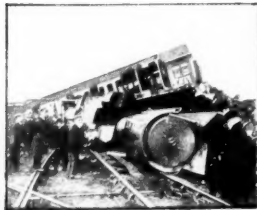
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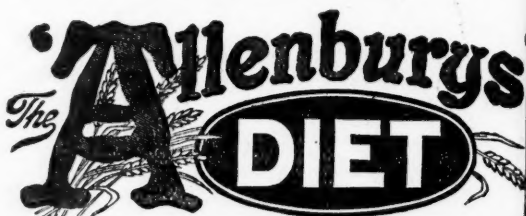
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